

THE CLARET-COLORED COAT.

BY MARY GRACE HALPINE.

Mrs. Burdock had been in a chronic state of jealousy of her husband ever since their marriage. Not that he had ever given her any occasion for suspicion; on the contrary, so far as she could learn, his conduct was the model of conjugal propriety. But as she often declared, with a mysterious shake of the head, "Joseph was deep, very deep; there was no knowing what he did when he was out of her sight and hearing."

Now the truth is, Mr. Burdock, though by no means obtuse, was not noted for the profundity of his intellect. Neither was he the sort of man calculated to make a woman jealous. He was a stout, red-faced gentleman of forty, or thereabouts, good-hearted, and with a pleasant and genial manner, but by no means disposed, either by nature or inclination, to be the gay deceiver that his wife imagined him.

But Mrs. Burdock adored her husband, and was firmly convinced that every woman of her acquaintance envied her the possession of such an incomparable man. She was equally as confident that none of her sex could resist his blandishments, whom he was desirous of pleasing.

"I, even I," she remarked, to one of her numerous confidants, "who have so much firmness and penetration, could not withstand his fascinations."

Contrary to what is usual, in such cases, Mrs. Burdock's heart was full of compassion for the victims of her husband's wiles; for that he had such she never permitted herself to doubt.

True, in spite of all her watchings, her peepings into his private correspondence, and questioning his associates and dependents, she had never yet detected him in any overt act—but what of that? It was only an additional proof of his duplicity, of the consummate art with which he covered up his infidelities. How else could he deceive a person of her skill and penetration?

"Mr. Burdock is deep, very deep," she would say, with a grim compression of the lips, after having followed some "very suspicious circumstance" until it resolved itself into quite a commonplace affair; "but he will be caught napping yet."

Mr. Burdock was a lawyer, though not a very brilliant one. He had gained considerable wealth; but, from the force of habit, still plodded on in the old beaten track.

He had no children, but had taken a nephew into his office to study law, whom common report declared he intended to make his heir.

However this might be, Mr. Burdock seemed to be quite fond of his nephew, James, in his way; said way—like a good many other people's ways—not always being very agreeable to the object of his affection.

"It's high time you were settled in life," he said, to his nephew, one day. "I will give you five thousand dollars, and if you marry a wife with as much more, it will give you a very fair start. There's nothing like getting a good start. Let me see. There's Miss Bagley, daughter of old Tom Bagley, she'll have that, if not more. Just the one for you!"

But James did not seem to share in his uncle's enthusiasm, but was ungrateful enough to hint that the lady in question was some years his senior, and not of a very prepossessing exterior.

At which Mr. Burdock took great umbrage, bidding his nephew suit himself as to a wife; all he insisted upon was, that she should have the qualifications named.

James' countenance, which had brightened at the commencement of his uncle's speech, fell at its conclusion, the cause for which the story will develop.

We forgot to say that Mr. Burdock had a claret-colored coat—a very unimportant omission, perhaps, the reader will say. Apparently; but important results are often brought about by very trifling circumstances. So, if it hadn't been for Mr. Burdock's coat our story would have remained untold.

Said coat had been in Mr. Burdock's possession some years, and was different in make, material, and color, from any other in the place; but it was a great favorite with him, and he wore it a good deal, because it was so easy and comfortable. So he became to be known by his coat, as far off as its color could be distinguished.

"How did you like the lecture last evening?" inquired a lady of Mrs. Burdock.

"I didn't hear it."

"I saw your husband there with a lady, and I thought, to be sure, it was you. But now I think of it, it looked more slender and girlish."

There was an ominous silence. Mrs. Burdock looked unutterable things, and her visitor had the painful consciousness of having alluded to some unpleasant circumstance.

"Are you sure it was my husband, Mrs. Drake?"

"Quite sure. I saw only his back; but I should know his claret-colored coat anywhere. I don't believe its like is to be found in the city."

"And the—the young person with him was—a woman?"

The solemnity with which this question was put, brought a smile to Mrs. Drake's lips.

"She had the appearance of one; though I couldn't swear to it."

This discovery was rolled over and over, in Mrs. Burdock's mind, until she saw her husband at noon, its meagreness of detail fully supplied by her active imagination.

"Where were you last evening?" she inquired, with an air of assumed carelessness.

"In my office."

"All the evening?"

"All the evening. Why do you ask?"

"Oh! nothing. I merely inquired," said Mrs. Burdock, indifferently; for it was, by no means, the purpose of this astute woman to put the deceiver on his guard.

After tea, Mr. Burdock went to his office, as was his usual custom, it being his practice to make, in his business, short mornings and long evenings. Removing his coat for something lighter, he proceeded to prepare himself for his work by the solace of a segar, and a glance at the evening paper.

Not long after her husband left, Mrs. Burdock followed, disguised in the attire of an old woman, with a large, close bonnet, that quite concealed her features.

She moved slowly along on the opposite sidewalk, frequently pausing, apparently for the purpose of looking in the shop-windows, but keeping a close watch on the office-door.

She was soon rewarded by seeing the door open, and her husband pass down the steps. True, she could not see his face for the muffler, and the cap that was pushed down over his eyes, but his coat was as familiar to her as his features.

He moved hurriedly down the street, as if anxious to avoid observation, and Mrs. Burdock followed.

He did not slacken his pace till he came to a large tree on the edge of the Common, where he was almost immediately joined by a woman closely veiled.

The woman threw back her veil as she reached his side, disclosing a fair, sweet face, whose eyes and lips smiled an eager welcome.

Mrs. Burdock could not see her husband's face; but she did see what almost took away her breath to witness; she saw him bend his head, and to kiss his companion again and again.

Mrs. Burdock's first impulse was to rush forward and overwhelm him with her knowledge of his perfidy; but upon second thought she concluded to attain her object in a more sure and certain way.

The pair moved slowly down the path; and Mrs. Burdock thought that she had never seen her husband stand so erect, and walk with such a free, joyous step.

They appeared to be conversing very earnestly; but though Mrs. Burdock followed as closely as she dared, all that she could distinguish was the words "our marriage," uttered by the woman, in reply to something said by her companion.

"So he is passing himself off as an unmarried man!" thought the wife, with a feeling of grim satisfaction at the discovery of this additional proof of the moral turpitude of the partner of her bosom, and of the male sex in general.

Evidently fearful of being observed, the pair soon separated; and Mrs. Burdock never once took her eyes from the claret-colored coat until she had seen it re-enter her husband's office. She then returned home, a supremely wretched woman, you will say. Not a bit of it! We are sorry to lose this grand opportunity of enlisting the reader's sympathies; but truth compels us to say that never had Mrs. Burdock been in a more satisfactory state of mind. All the mortifying failures of the past were more than compensated by the triumph that was now in store for her.

And when her husband returned, it was better than any play to her to hear him relate, as she artfully led him on to do, the manner in which he had spent the evening.

"I may be an injured wife, Mr. Burdock," was her inward comment, as she listened. "I should rather think I was; but it by no means follows that I am a deceived one, as well!"

For three consecutive nights, at the same hour, the claret-colored coat issued from Mr. Burdock's office, going the same way, pausing by the same tree, where it was joined by the

same lady. And each time it was followed by the attentive eyes and steps of Mrs. Burdock.

Upon the third, she succeeded in tracing the young lady to her home, for the identification of the artful creature was the next move in Mrs. Burdock's carefully-laid plan to circumvent her faithless husband.

It was a modest house, in a retired part of the town. The name on the door-plate was Capt. Thorne. She learned, afterward, that he was a retired naval-officer, quite infirm, and whose family consisted of himself, one servant, and his niece, Jennie, the young lady in question.

The morning after this discovery, as Miss Jennie was seated in the parlor, thinking of—no matter whom, she was startled by the appearance of a dignified-looking lady, with a very grave and severe countenance.

"My name is Burdock," was the visitor's preliminary observation.

The young lady certainly changed color, but did not appear to be so overwhelmed by this announcement as her visitor expected. Mrs. Burdock, therefore, continued in a still more crushing tone and manner,

"You are in the habit of meeting, every evening, between the hours of seven and nine, a gentleman upon the Common."

The bright color rose from the cheeks to the temples, but there was no guilt in the clear, steady gaze that met her own.

"I have called on you with the impression—or, at least the hope that you are unacquainted with his true name and position."

"You are mistaken; I am very well informed on both points."

"Indeed! Then you know that his name is Burdock?"

"Certainly."

"And that he is a married man?"

The color suddenly receded from her cheeks.

"Married, madam? Impossible!"

"Being his wife, I think I ought to know."

"You his wife?"

"Yes. I repeat it, I am the wife of Joseph Burdock."

The young lady stared at her visitor in blank amazement; and then, as if overcome by some uncontrollable emotion, suddenly buried her face in her handkerchief.

Mrs. Burdock surveyed her with a feeling of mingled self-complacency at this proof of her husband's fascinations, and compassion for their victim.

"I am far from considering you blame-

worthy," she continued, in a softer voice, "except in the thoughtlessness and imprudence natural to youth. I am not ignorant of the peculiar charm that Mr. Burdock exercises over our sex. Even I, with all my firmness and penetration, am not proof against its powers. But I trust, now that you know his real position, that you will see the necessity of rooting from your heart a hopeless, and I may add, sinful passion."

Here Jennie removed her handkerchief from the eyes, that, certainly, had not lost anything of their old sparkle in the apparent grief that had convulsed her frame.

"Isn't it possible that madam may be mistaken in the person?"

"No, it isn't," was the positive rejoinder. "I followed him from his office to the Common three successive nights. I think I ought to know my husband's claret-colored coat, upon which I put a new collar, with my own hands, only a fortnight ago."

This proof seemed to be incontrovertible, and Jennie again hid her face in her handkerchief.

Whereupon Mrs. Burdock again addressed her in a consoling and admonitory strain; but unable to elicit any response, finally took her leave in a very serene and contented frame of mind.

Before Mrs. Burdock had decided upon the next move in her counterplot, James, her husband's nephew, solicited a private interview, for the purpose of getting her to exert her influence in his behalf with his uncle.

"I am attached to a worthy, and very charming young lady," he said, "Miss Thorne, niece of Capt. Thorne; but my uncle utterly refuses his consent on account of her want of fortune."

"On account of her want of fortune?" repeated Mrs. Burdock, with a smile of scornful incredulity. "Why don't you marry without it, then?"

"Because Jennie won't marry without her uncle's consent, which he will not give unless I get my uncle's also."

Inwardly delighted at the turn affairs were taking, Mrs. Burdock maintained a grave exterior. What a fortunate combination of circumstances this was that thus placed the game in her own hands!

"I thought I heard Mr. Burdock say that you could marry whom you chose, providing she brought you a dowry of five thousand dollars?"

"So he did; but then Jennie hasn't a penny,

and won't have. Her uncle's income, which is small, dies with him."

"That don't make any difference. I have property in my own right, as you know, and will give Miss Thorne the amount necessary on the day of her marriage. But only on the condition that you marry her directly, and without saying a word to your uncle until after the ceremony."

To this, highly elated at her generous offer, he eagerly agreed.

In order to assure Capt. Thorne, Mrs. Burdock attended the wedding, excusing her husband's absence on the plea of business. The ceremony took place very quietly in the morning; and after the ceremony was over, Mrs. Burdock redeemed her promise of dowering the bride; suggesting to the newly-made husband, ere she took her leave, that he should now call upon his uncle for the fulfillment of his, to which the bridegroom readily assented.

Mrs. Burdock had previously written a line to Jennie, urging her to accept her husband's nephew, and pledging herself to secrecy in regard to all that had occurred; but she was hardly prepared for the serene and happy face of the young bride, as the latter completed her terrible sacrifice. Especially was Mrs. Burdock at a loss to comprehend the dimpling smiles that broke over Jennie's face, as she privately assured Mrs. Burdock, "that so long as she was a good, true wife to her husband, he should never know of her entanglement with his uncle."

Mrs. Burdock would have been better pleased if Jennie had not been so easily consoled for the loss of the property, over which she had proved her exclusive ownership; but nothing could damp the anticipations of her approaching triumph.

She went home to await her husband's return, spending the intervening hours in dwelling upon his consternation at his nephew's announcement; mentally rehearsing the crushing manner with which she would swoop down upon him, overwhelming him with her knowledge of his treachery; the cutting irony with which she would allude to his congratulations to the happy pair, etc., etc.

Would he indulge in any more little pleasantries concerning her "wonderful discoveries?" And if he did, had she not now an argument that would effectually silence him?

Mr. Burdock was late to dinner—a thing that seldom occurred; the soup was cold, and the fish overdone. But his rosy face quite

shone with good-humor as he seated himself at the table.

"So James is married at last, and gone on his wedding-tour; and a nice wife he seems to have. They called at my office this morning. I didn't know that Miss Thorne had any fortune; but it seems that some friend settled five thousand dollars on her, on condition that she married James. Lucky dog!"

Mrs. Burdock looked her disgust at what she inwardly termed "a piece of fine acting."

"You may be surprised to learn, Mr. Burdock, that I am the friend you allude to."

"You!"

Mrs. Burdock surveyed her husband with a look that ought to have annihilated him, had looks the power in real life that they have in the world of romance.

"And not only the friend of that deluded girl, but of the man who sought her ruin, and whose baseness and treachery he need no longer attempt to conceal!"

Mr. Burdock placed upon his plate the potato that he had held suspended upon the end of his fork during this outburst of his wife's long bottled-up indignation.

"I suppose you know what you mean, my dear," he said, dryly; "but, I must confess, that you are either too high or too deep for my comprehension."

"Indeed! Perhaps you will allow me to offer my condolences on the sudden interruption that your nephew's marriage puts to your pleasant walks with Miss Thorne?"

"Never walked a step with the girl in my life!"

"D'ye think I don't know your coat, Mr. Burdock—your claret-colored coat? Three successive nights I followed you from your office to the Common, where you went to meet that girl! I advise you, in case you meditate any further gallantries, to wear some other outer garment than the one as familiar to those who know you as your face."

"My claret-colored coat, hey? By-the-way, where is my claret-colored coat? I've had it on my mind to ask you that question for a week past. It disappeared all of a sudden, a fortnight ago, and I haven't seen it since. It must have been stolen."

"A very ingenious excuse, Mr. Burdock, for which I give you all credit! But you don't explain how it happens that the thief should be seen three times leaving your office with the coat on his back?"

Before Mr. Burdock could reply, a servant entered with a brown paper parcel.

"A package that Mr. James left for you, sir."

"Did you ever!" ejaculated Mr. Burdock, as he opened it, "if here isn't the very coat we were talking about!"

On one of the sleeves was pinned the following note:

"MY DEAR UNCLE—I return the coat, under whose friendly cover I enjoyed so many delightful interviews with Mrs. James Burdock, that now is, with sincere regrets that it should have thus endangered your domestic tranquillity.

"Give my kindest regards to your wife, to whom I owe all my present felicity, and believe me to be
Your dutiful nephew,
"JAMES."

Mr. Burdock's astonishment, as he read this note, soon changed into mirth, and he laughed until the tears rolled down his cheeks.

"To think, my dear," he said, as soon as he could speak, "of your dodging James about

under the impression that it was me; and giving his wife nearly half your private fortune for the sake of getting rid of a supposed rival! Of all the queer blunders of the kind that you have made since our marriage, this is the queerest and most ridiculous!"

Mrs. Burdock beat a rapid retreat to her own room; the hearty "hal hal hal" of her husband following her as she ascended the stairs.

She kept her chamber for some days, partly from chagrin, and partly from the effect of a severe cold, caught during her nocturnal rambles.

Mr. Burdock became very much attached to his nephew's wife, and the little Burdocks that sprang up around her; of which he left them at his death, some years after, many substantial proofs.

But no one thing among them was prized so highly, or cherished so carefully by the loving and happy pair as the well-known "CLARET-COLORED COAT."

LOVE IN A STAGE-COACH

BY HELEN MAXWELL.

An old lumbering, shackling, rusty stage-coach is, perhaps, not the most romantic place for love-making.

Some people have an idea that stage-coaches no longer exist; but there are stage-coaches in plenty all over the country. To be sure, they are not magnificent concerns, with a boot and a rumble. To be sure, they are not drawn by six spirited horses with leaders. To be sure, the "ribbons" are not held in the practiced hands of the immortal Tony Weller.

Stage-coaches now-a-days have sadly degenerated. Instead of the picture that we all have in our imaginations of a shining yellow-bodied coach, with a racer painted on one door-panel, and a ballet-dancer on the other; dappled-gray horses, in fine condition, tearing down hill at a tremendous pace; a stout, red-faced coachman, his chin buried in a vast shawl; the "out-siders" having a monstrous good time drinking out of bottles, and carving chicken with case-knives; and one young lady, her blue veil streaming in the wind, in sentimental converse with a young gentleman in a loosely-tied cravat and curly hair; instead, I say, of this, we have a dusty, shabby, ramshackle affair, drawn by two lean horses, a driver who chews tobacco, and says, "I swow," and the sort; or, as the English would say, the outside, ignominiously covered with a tattered oil-cloth, to protect the luggage.

The country town in which I spent a portion of last winter had two stage arrivals and departures daily. One, the green one, came from a village called Appleton; and the other, a yellow one, from a lake-shore village, known as Idakanoe.

It happened that time hung somewhat heavily upon my hands, and I bethought myself of an invitation I had received to visit some friends in Idakanoe. They were a nice old couple who lived in a cottage on the lake-shore. I had visited them as a child, and retained a vivid remembrance of a small, low house, surrounded by a sandy garden. From this garden, a path led over the hill to a long, smooth beach, where common shells were to be found in abundance. I well remembered the shells, and the fact that all the pictures in the cottage were framed with them.

The old people had been very urgent that I should come; so, as the winter was almost over, and gayety at a low ebb, I determined to avail myself of the invitation. The stage called for me one cold, dreary morning. The roads, which had been thawed out by a bright sun the day before, were now frozen in rough ridges. The lead-colored sky threatened another snow-storm. The comfortless-looking stage, with its narrow seats and flapping curtains, did not present the most fascinating inducements for a morning's drive of eighteen or twenty miles.

It was with decided reluctance that I left a warm fireside, and cheerful, busy circle, to bundle myself up for the journey. The stage-driver stood on the steps, stamping his feet and swinging his arms. The horses looked melancholy, as they thought of the long route before them. For my own part, when I had said good-by, closed the front door, and taken an outside view of the miseries of the situation. I almost determined to send a note in place of myself. The driver's friendly nod and inquiry, "Are you well protected from the weather, marm?" were somewhat reassuring; and I determined to undertake the journey.

"Am I your only passenger?" I asked, as he was tucking the buffalo-ropes well about me.

"I am to call at the hotel for a gentleman, and I guess that'll be about all the load I'll get."

He climbed into his seat. I waved an adieu to the children, who soon gathered at the window, watching my departure with the greatest interest and longing—long over of the rosy group—that they were going, too. Poor little mortals! they did not know what cold fingers and toes they would have had to endure.

We jolted through a couple of streets, and around some slippery corners, where the old vehicle threatened to tip over, and was only prevented, I felt convinced, by the energy with which I leaned on the opposite side, and brought all my strength to the balance. Presently we stopped in front of the hotel. The silence after the rumbling, rattling, and squeaking of the coach, was almost oppressive.

"All right there!" asked the driver.

"All right," was the response from the house.

A tall man, wrapped in a dark gray overcoat, and with a seal-skin cap pulled closely over a quantity of crisp hair—which would have curled if allowed to grow long enough—appeared at the door. He had a traveling-shawl thrown over one arm, and a heavy leather-bag in his hand.

"Why does not the porter fetch my trunk?" he called out, somewhat impatiently. "I shall, of course, miss the boat if I am detained in this way."

I felt a guilty consciousness that I had kept the stage waiting for a half-hour, at least.

"Here I am, sir," said the porter, hurrying from the house with the trunk.

The driver and porter together strapped the trunk upon the roof, and almost shook the life out of me in the process. The gentleman took the front seat, and we were again *en route*.

My traveling companion took not the slightest notice of me after a brief "good-morning," and lifting of his cap. I was, probably, not at all an interesting-looking bundle, having on at least two cloaks, two shawls, a bon, a muff, fur hood, and a thick veil! Besides this, I was done up like a mummy in buffalo-ropes. For a moment I entertained the idea of taking off my veil and discovering to the stranger that I was neither old nor ugly. But the wind whistled in at one of the cracks, and asked me, in a sharp whisper, what I would gain by it? What, indeed!

So I sat in my corner and looked out upon the cheerless, wintry landscape. Only yesterday it had been smiling with a promise of spring, and now it was frozen and dark, as if winter had obstinately determined to have it all over again, and do his uttermost to make us miserable. The driver whistled, and spoke friendly words to his horses, as the old beasts trudged steadily along.

The stranger sat with his chin pressed upon the soft collar of his coat. He looked cold and tired, and occasionally gave an impatient twist from one side to the other of the coach. Once or twice I saw him glance toward me, as if almost inclined for a little conversation. But the immovable bundles seemed to discourage him from the attempt. We had, perhaps, accomplished eight or ten miles of our journey without exchanging a word, when something occurred that completely altered the aspect of affairs—we broke down.

"What is the matter?" cried the stranger, as we came to a sudden, jarring stop.

"Wheel broke," said the driver. "Jerushy! What are we going to do now?"

"Here, open the door!" ordered the gentleman, as he shook the crazy handle; "we shall have to mend it somehow, of course."

"Can't be done, I'm afraid," said the driver, opening the door; "it's pretty badly smashed."

"Is there no blacksmith's-shop near?"

"Four miles along. I'll take one of the horses and be back in no time."

"I shall take the other, and make my way to the lake. I am afraid I have lost the boat as it is. You can send my box after me."

"Going to Canada, perhaps?"

"Yes."

"Who'll take care of the lady when we are both off, I wonder?"

I had raised my veil, and was looking anxiously from the window.

"I am not afraid to stay alone," I said. "Pray don't let me interfere with any plan."

"I beg a thousand pardons!" said the gentleman, quickly. "I spoke without thinking. Of course, I remain with you while the coachman goes to find assistance."

"But the boat? You will be left."

"It is of no consequence, believe me."

"I will get back as soon as I can," said the driver, as he mounted his horse; "it's beginning to snow, do you see?"

Sure enough the large flakes were coming down, softly but steadily.

"It looks like a heavy storm," said the stranger, after he had resumed his seat in the stage.

"Do you think the roads will be blocked up?" I asked.

"I cannot tell," he answered, smiling; "we will hope not—at least, before we have reached our destination."

I looked out upon the wide, bare fields and lonely road. There was not so much as a shanty in sight. But I discovered one little path, winding through a field, and into a dark pine-wood. I pointed this out to my companion.

"I must remember the direction of that path," he said; "it enters the wood, I see, this side of that half-burnt stump."

"Then you think there is some danger?"

"Indeed, I do not. But it is as well to take what precautions we can. Fortunately," he continued, looking at his watch, "it is early yet, and there is no fear of night overtaking us on the road."

"I reproach myself," I said, after a pause, "for having permitted you to remain with me."

"It was not you who permitted it," he said, laughing. "It was I who would not go."

"But you were anxious to go at first."

"Perhaps so; but then, you see, I did not know what it was in the corner of the coach."

"You know it was a woman."

"How could I know it? You neither moved nor spoke."

I, of course, laughed; and presently we were talking together in the friendly, almost confidential, manner which one falls into so readily on a journey even with a stranger.

The ground was now white with snow, and the air so thick with the flakes that we could hardly see the pine-woods across the field. I kept an anxious look-out for the return of our driver. "What can possibly keep him so long?" I said, at last.

"He has only been gone an hour; and at the gait of that old horse, he has not much more than reached the blacksmith's."

"Then it will be another hour before he returns?"

"That, at least."

"Oh, dear!" I exclaimed, dreadingly; "and I am so cold and hungry."

"You shall have my shawl. I only wish I had had the forethought to bring some luncheon."

"Indeed I shall not take your shawl," I interposed, as he stood up to fold it around me. "I really have more than enough; it is my feet that are cold."

"Then I shall put it around your feet," he said, kneeling as he spoke.

"And what will you do without?"

"If you will allow me, I will sit back with you, and share your fur robes."

"I ought to have thought of that before," making room for him. "By-the-by!" I exclaimed, "I have some biscuits in my bag, if I could only get at them."

"Where is your bag?"

"Strapped to my waist," I said, standing up and putting aside my numerous wraps. I succeeded in reaching the bag, and the biscuits proved a great comfort. We had a very jolly time over our poor, little feast—and the stranger and I were fast becoming friends. Once he got out to give our remaining horse some hay, which was found in the box-seat, and to cover up the poor beast with a moth-eaten old rug, which the driver had used. The hour passed, and another, and almost a third; but still no sign of our deliverance. The snow was rapidly deepening, and the road being obliterated, I became very uneasy, and at last frightened. What if help did not reach us, and we

should be completely blocked up in the snow! My companion evidently shared my uneasiness to some extent, although he made light of our condition when I expressed my fears in words.

"If you are willing," he said, suddenly, "I think it would be as well if I explored that foot-path."

"And leave me alone?" I cried, in alarm. "No; please, do not. Suppose you could not find your way back again?"

"Will you go with me, then? For it is now four o'clock, and in another hour it will be dark."

"If you go, I go, too."

"Very well," he said. "I think myself that it will be best."

He got out of the coach, and commenced unbuckling the horse from the pole. "What are you doing that for?" I asked.

"You will see," he answered, laughing; and proceeded to fold up the buffalo-robe and strap it, saddlewise, to the horse's back.

"Now," he said, coming to me, "if you are ready, I will help you to mount."

"Am I to ride?" looking dubiously at the old horse and insecure seat.

"It is perfectly safe, I assure you; and, indeed, you would find it ~~anything~~ but comfortable wading in the snow."

I acknowledged this as I looked over the trackless field—so allowed myself to be lifted to the "pillion." The stranger took the bridle in his hand, and we proceeded diagonally across the field to the old stump, which was still visible, although almost covered by the snow. When once in the wood, the path became more distinct, and the thick, pine-trees protected us somewhat from the wind. The wood was dense and long, but we at last reached the end of it, and had the satisfaction of seeing a snug-looking farm-house perched on a hill half a mile off. We made our way gayly along now, and felt that our more serious troubles were safely over with.

"Perhaps it would be as well if we were to know each other's names," said the stranger, as we neared the house. "Allow me to introduce myself. I am Edward Thorne, of Montreal."

"We must be cousins," I cried, holding out my hand. "I am Eleanor Thorne, of New York."

We shook hands cordially, and Mr. Thorne acknowledged the cousinship with flattering eagerness.

We received a noisy welcome from half a dozen dogs when we reached the house; and

immediately a white-headed little boy appeared at the door, and gazed at us in open-mouthed astonishment.

"What are you doing there, Tommy?" cried a woman's voice. "Come in and shut the door, and stop the dogs a-yelping."

Mr. Thorne had lifted me from the horse, and I walked as well as I could, for I was stiff with the cold, to where Tommy was standing.

"Ask your mother to step here," I said.

"Ma!" screamed the young one, at the top of his lungs.

"What ails the boy, I wonder!" muttered the woman, approaching the door. Then, seeing me, she exclaimed, "For mercy's sake! who's that?"

I explained who I was, and how I came there.

"Come right in," she cried; "and Tom, you show the gentleman the way to the barn. You'll find your father there."

She ushered me into a big, warm kitchen, where everything was as neat as wax. Drawing up an old-fashioned rocking-chair, she placed me in it, and commenced taking off my things, indulging in a running stream of exclamations and questions the while.

"You're here for a week, I guess," she said, at last, not very encouragingly. "It's an awful storm, and before morning the drifts will be over your head."

I was in hopes that there was some exaggeration in this statement; but when Mr. Thorne came in with the woman's husband, it was confirmed.

"I am going to take a sledge and fetch your trunks from the stage," said the farmer, giving my hand a grip in hospitable welcome. "Wife, take care you make everything comfortable."

"I'll take care," she answered. "I'll build a fire in the spare room, and have supper ready before you get back." Then, turning to me, she asked in a loud whisper, "Are you his wife?"

"No," I replied, blushing excessively at the blunt question.

"We are cousins," said Mr. Thorne, quietly.

"That's it, eh?" she said, perfectly satisfied.

"I guessed there was some sort of kinship."

And she bustled out of the kitchen, probably for the purpose of building a fire in the "spare room." Presently there were loud calls for Tommy to bring some chips. That young gentleman reluctantly gave up his employment of staring at Mr. Thorne and myself, and went to do his mother's bidding. He reappeared in the course of a few minutes, looking as if he had bathed in chips; they were sticking to his

clothes, dripping from his shoes, and his hair was absolutely bristling with them.

I felt some embarrassment when left alone with Mr. Thorne. To be thrown into so great an intimacy with a perfect stranger, a man I had never seen before that morning; to be "cousins," and to be thought his wife—the woman's supposition was, after all, the most annoying.

But Mr. Thorne appeared to take it all very coolly, and showed no consciousness of my embarrassment. He commenced talking about our good fortune in falling into such kind hands, and declared that he quite enjoyed the prospect of a week in the farm-house.

"I should not mind it so much," I said, "if it were not for my friends in Idakanœ and —, who will suffer much anxiety on my account."

"If it had not been for our break-down," said Mr. Thorne, "we would have reached Idakanœ by this time. Therefore, your friends in — will suppose that you arrived there safely; and your friends in Idakanœ will naturally take it for granted that the storm prevented you from undertaking the journey; and as it will certainly prevent letters from going either way, I think you you may conclude that they will be quite easy."

This explanation was so labored that, although not so satisfactory as he evidently supposed it would be, I could not help laughing.

"You are very consoling," I said; "and, indeed, I know there is nothing to be done but make the best of it."

Farmer Hutchins returned with our trunks, and we all sat down to a bountiful country supper. The bright kitchen, the friendly, homely faces of the farmer and his wife were cheery to look upon. My friend Tommy, quite cured of the chips, buttoned into his best clothes, and with his hair brushed and greased till it shone again, looked as if just prepared for Sunday-school.

The storm continued for five days; and then the sun burst gayly out; dispersed the snow-clouds after a brief battle, and sent them rolling sulkily off to the horizon. They quite disappeared after awhile, and left the sun a clear field of blue, in which he shone most radiantly. The great drifts of snow melted rapidly; the trees shook off their burdens; and before long the outlines of the roads and paths could be traced. I stood at the window and watched the transformation almost regretfully, for the five days had been pleasant ones to me. The life in the farm-house was novel, but full of

homely amusements. I had taken lessons in bread and cake-making from Mrs. Hutchins, and had succeeded wonderfully in the composition of a plum-pudding! Mr. Thorne read while I tried my hand at cooking, and never laughed too much over a spoilt batch of biscuits, or a burnt cake.

And all these pleasant hours had come to an end! Farmer Hutchins said the stage could get through the next day; and, of course, I had no excuse to linger, although kindly urged to do so.

"I declare it 'll be awful lonesome without you," said Mrs. Hutchins, with a sigh, as she helped me put the few things I had needed into my trunk again. "I guess you'll have to promise to stop and see us on your way back before I give you leave to go."

I gave the promise very gladly.

"Of course, I mean your cousin, too," continued Mrs. Hutchins. "He'll be along with you, I don't doubt."

"Oh, no!" I said, a little sadly, realizing that the journey back would be dull enough without him.

"I bet he will," said the farmer's wife, emphatically. "Why, I never see one cousin so fond of another before; he never takes his eyes off you when you're around."

"Indeed, you are mistaken, Mrs. Hutchins!" I exclaimed, feeling the blood rush into my face.

"Well, perhaps I be," she said, laughing; "but I'm generally considered pretty cute at spying out love-making. And when I seen him picking up a little slipper of yours that had accidentally got swept out into the hall near your door, and go to kissing it, and put it into his pocket, thinks I to myself, I guess I know what's o'clock."

So that was what had become of my slipper! I had had a search for it that very morning, and had been loth to give it up, such a pretty, tidy fit as it was. But now, somehow, I felt perfectly reconciled to its loss.

The next day brought the stage to the door with our "driver."

"Well, you *did* get snowed in, didn't you?" was his only remark when he saw me.

"Yes; but we were lucky enough to find very comfortable quarters," I said. "I hope you came to no harm?"

"Not I! I lost my way in the storm, but I got out all right, and shouldn't have minded it if it hadn't been for you and the gentleman. However, I guessed you'd find your way here. We'll have a tough time of it now getting on;

but if you don't mind being jogged, we might as well try it."

Of course, we said we did not mind being jogged. So our leave-takings were dispatched with regret on both sides, I am sure. Tommy howled a little, and was only appeased by some whispered words of Mr. Thorne.

Our boxes were strapped on top of the stage; and again was I made a bundle of, although this time I insisted upon having my face uncovered.

"I'll count on having you both stop on your return," cried out Mrs. Hutchins, as the stage moved off.

"We will not fail to do so," said Mr. Thorne, waving his hand from the window.

It was a rather odd promise for him to make, I thought. How could he know what I would do!

After a slow, tedious drive, and no lack of the threatened jogging, we reached Idakano. Mr. Thorne lifted me from the stage at the door of the little lake-shore cottage, which looked brown and bleak in the early winter twilight.

"How long will you remain here?" he asked me, as he pounded on the door with the brass knocker.

"A week or ten days, I thought."

"Farewell, then. God bless you!"

The door opened, and a flood of warm light fell upon us.

"Good-by!" he said again, pressing my hand.

"Good-by!" I murmured.

The driver lifted my trunk into the hall; Mr. Thorne re-entered the coach, and they drove off.

I received a joyful welcome from my two dear, old friends, whom I found sitting on either side of the open fire-place, watching the burning hickory-logs, and talking of their youth.

A week dragged slowly past—the longest week I ever lived! It was almost too cold to venture out for a walk; so I sat in the little window-seat in the drawing-room, looking at the blue waters of the lake, and pretending to read. Every evening at sundown I watched for a long line of smoke in the sky, which heralded the approach of the steamer from Canada; and then I was restless for another hour, listening for a knock at the door!

It came at last. Mr. Thorne was ushered into the room, and I received him, I feared, with almost too much cordiality. But it was so pleasant to see his kind face again, so

pleasant to hear his kind voice. I felt as if we were very old friends, indeed—or, in truth, the cousins we "played" at being.

It was arranged that I should return to — under his care, taking the stage the following morning.

The roads were in tolerable condition; the sun smiling cheerily and trying to warm the earth; and I felt as smiling and cheery as the sun itself when we started.

We drove at a good pace for some miles, the jangling, rattling old coach making so much noise that any attempt at conversation ended in laughter and a shake of the head, which meant, "I don't hear one word!"

But it wasn't a great while before we came to a long hill, and the coachman pulled up his fiery steeds and allowed them to plod slowly up, while he amused himself singing, in a very gruff bass voice, a sentimental song!

Then we had a little sentiment inside the coach; for Mr. Thorne took this opportunity of, telling me a secret which I had already divined; and I managed to make him understand, in spite of the deafening accompaniments of the sentimental song and the squeaking hinges, that I loved him in return.

Tommy met us with calm delight, but with expectation depicted upon his expressive countenance. His eyes almost popped out of his head, when a large, brown package was handed to him, with the information that all it contained was for himself alone.

Mrs. Hutchins had everything in gala-day trim; her best gown on, and the dinner-table loaded with good things.

"Husband received your letter, Mr. Thorne, so I was looking for you. And I am powerful glad to have you back again, my dear," to me; "I was real lonesome after you."

Her delight when Mr. Thorne told her that we were engaged was very droll.

"I know'd how it would be when I see you kissing that slipper, it wasn't natural conduct for a cousin, unless you were courting. I told her about it, too—didn't I, my dear? And you just should have seen her blush!"

We staid two days at the farm-house, and then went on to —. Our friend, the driver, had evidently found out what had occurred, for he wished me much happiness, and insisted upon shaking hands at parting. And then went through the same ceremony with Mr. Thorne, seemingly much to his own satisfaction; for I saw him withdraw his hand with a crisp, green bill in it, which had not been there before, I am sure.

The old stage-coach rattled, and creaked, and groaned, as it drove off, as if it personally objected to the arrangement entered into under its protection, and wished us to understand that it repudiated us, and considered its confidence abused. But "I love" sounded as fresh and sweet inside of its musty curtains, as it could have done in a crimson drawing-room by the light of a blazing fire.

JOHN JACKSON'S COURTSHIP.

BY B. S. BARRETT.

JOHN JACKSON entertained the theory that no man should marry for the mere sake of convenience. In fact, there appeared to him to be so much inconvenience attendant upon matrimonial intentions, desiderations, preparations, and deliberations, that he had allowed forty years to pass away without so much as giving the matter a serious thought. Still, he was fond of society, and although he devoted the most of his life to the acquisition of wealth, and was the reputed possessor of many thousands of dollars, he had never allowed the pursuit of riches, nor the worship of Mammon to embitter his social disposition, nor to sour the genial qualities of his nature.

N—— is a beautiful village on the banks of the Hudson, where the tall trees cast a grateful shade, and the long, leafy avenues invite to pleasant walks and delightful drives. Thither fate conducted John Jackson, just when the trees had donned their richest foliage; when the fields were resonant with the matin and vesper song of birds: when the avenues gave their most pressing invitations; and when, in short, the whole country, the very atmosphere, the landscape, the placid water, and all that he saw, seemed to the mind of John Jackson the most delightful confluence of happy sights that he had ever beheld.

Fate, not content with bringing Mr. Jackson to so lovely a spot, must needs introduce him to a larger circle of friends, (Fate's friends,) a very considerable portion of whom were young ladies, whose dimpled arms and rosy cheeks made frightful havoc with John's bachelor intentions.

Resisting the temptation which is upon me, to introduce some half-dozen of these delightful creatures to the reader, I will follow John Jackson's example, and single out one only, who seemed to be, in Mr. Jackson's estimation, not only queen of beauty in her own vicinity, but the prettiest, happiest, kindest, and most amiable young woman in the whole world. Her name was Lucy Smith—not a very romantic name, to be sure; but then I see no reason why Lucy Smith, or Jane Brown, may not be as beautiful girls as Cleopatra, or Juliette, at least so thought John—and I think he was right.

Not to make too long a story of this little

sketch, suffice it to say that after many long drives in the country, many moonlight rambles, many picnic excursions, and many midnight flirtations, John Jackson found himself in love, and determined to propose, and offer himself a sacrifice on the matrimonial altar.

A splendid opportunity immediately occurred, as such opportunities always do, and, finding themselves alone, John Jackson plunged boldly into the subject by observing that, "Complete happiness, after all, is not to be attained by living always alone."

Lucy looked shyly up at him with a smile, as though she thought it strange he had just found that out. She had always known it, and looked forward to it; and, although she was now but eighteen, and in no hurry, she knew that a time must come when the happiness of single blessedness would melt into the far greater happiness of married life. Still, like all women, she was certain to say something in direct opposition to her thoughts.

"I hardly think it possible," she replied.

"Indeed! Well, so I have thought, too, for many years; but the conviction is now forced upon me that it is possible to conceive so great a friendship, or affection, for some particular one, that hopeless separation from that person would be life-long wretchedness."

"Very likely," Lucy answered, with a *nonchalant* air, as if it was not of the slightest consequence to her.

Without taking note of her listlessness, nor thinking of consequences, but following the rapid train of his own thoughts, which urged him on, he abruptly threw his arm around her waist, seized her hand, and said, with more passionate feeling than he had ever before displayed in the whole course of his life.

"Lucy, I love you! Will you be my wife?"

The idea had never occurred to her till that moment that John Jackson could possibly be a lover. She had regarded him as a pleasant companion for moonlight rides, and a sort of bachelor convenience, generally; but that he would ever fall in love with her, or make her an offer of marriage, had no more entered into her mind than if she had been a child of eight, instead of eighteen, and he a grandfather of eighty, instead of a bachelor of forty.

She was at first startled, then astonished; then, struck with the ludicrous idea of her situation, burst into a laugh. Recovering her gravity in a moment, she replied,

"I never dreamed of this! I—I am grateful for your kindness, and for the honor you have done me, but I cannot——"

Here, happening to look up in his face, and seeing the blank expression there, she burst into another laugh, and rushed out of the room.

John Jackson was not prepared for this, nor for anything like this. He had thought she might hesitate, or even put him off for a time, but that she would absolutely decline him, John Jackson's hand and fortune—why, the thing was decidedly preposterous. He, a man worth over a hundred thousand in gold, (this was "before the war;") and she the daughter of a man not worth ten thousand, a mere giddy flirt—but such a beautiful one! "I have made a ridiculous ass of myself now," thought John; and he rubbed his eyes to awake himself; he stuck his penknife into his hand to assure himself that he was not asleep; he stamped his foot, and, I fear, he swore.

How they met afterward; how she asked his forgiveness for her levity; how they agreed to be friends; how she still assured him there was no hope; how John Jackson tore himself away from N——, with all its loveliness, forever, no doubt he thought, requires only this paragraph to explain.

The assertion, made by Mr. Jackson in the heat of angry passion, that Mr. Smith was not worth ten thousand, was not quite correct. In fact, that gentleman was looked upon, in the little town of N——, as one of its wealthiest inhabitants. He lived in a house, which, though not of palatial dimensions, was, nevertheless, far better than ordinary village residences; and the surrounding grounds and appurtenances were sufficient assurances that he possessed abundance. He was a man of extremely quiet habits, and his reticence, no doubt, led to the belief that he was far richer than he actually was. His family consisted of himself, wife, and two daughters, the oldest of whom, Lucy, is already known to the reader. The younger, Margaret, though not fully developed during Mr. Jackson's visit, bid fair, in time, to rival her sister in loveliness.

It is not to be presumed, by any manner of means, that John Jackson was the only suitor Lucy had. The fact is, a certain Harry Bailey was an accepted lover—not, perhaps, just at the time Mr. Jackson was in N——, but imme-

diately after, and it was understood by all parties concerned that they were to be married as soon as they were deemed of sufficient age to assume so responsible a position.

This Master Harry was the son of a well-to-do grocer in N——, and, like all other young men of twenty, or thereabouts, was fond of spirited horses, dashing turnouts, fine clothes, and fast life on a moderate scale. That he sincerely admired Lucy, there can be no doubt; but whether he would have been willing to marry her without money, is very questionable.

In the meantime, John Jackson, after his departure from N——, began to turn matters over in his mind, and like a defeated general, to investigate the causes of his repulse. His long devotion to business had not been conducive to an excess of refinement, and there is no doubt there was a little too much of the rough diamond about him. However kind and well-disposed he might be, and such, indeed, he was, there was still a want of polish which is always required to give effect, in the eyes of the ladies, to the best of well-intentioned purposes. Dress, speech, and action, are all matters that must have our most careful attention, even though we may be the possessor of millions, or have the kindest heart, and the most genial nature imaginable. This is more especially the case when age, with its cares, begins to obliterate the charms of youth, and when we begin to be looked upon as "too old to marry."

So John Jackson made up his mind, that, though somewhat tardy, he would make an effort to remedy these defects of which he stood possessed; and bidding adieu to his store, his warehouses, and his office, he took his departure for Europe.

As I am endeavoring to write a two-volume novel into the condensed space of a few pages, I am reluctantly obliged to forego the pleasure of following our hero through his travels; but must be content to take him as he appears, after three years' wandering through foreign lands, and shake hands with him as he steps ashore, radiant with smiles, beaming with health, clad in broadcloth, and with a suavity which can only be acquired by mixing in society where no infringement of the strictest etiquette is tolerated. He looked far younger at forty-three than he did at forty.

In order to enjoy a week in the country, at the most charming time of the year, he posted away, uninvited, to a cousin's not far from Hartford. This cousin was a man named Thomas Jackson, of about his own age, and having recently married a young and lovely

woman, John promised himself seven days happiness in contemplating the connubial felicity of others, which had been denied to him.

"Why, John Jackson! How dy'e do? Didn't dream of seein' yew here. Thought yew was miles on miles away, clean across the ocean. Glad t' see ye. When d'y'e gi' back?"

All this John's cousin rattled off in a breath, all the time shaking John's hand with both of his, as if he were working at a fire-engine. He possessed the family congeniality.

"Well, Thomas," replied John, in his quiet, friendly way, "I have but just returned, and wishing to avoid the heat of the town for a short time, thought I would run down here for a day or two, and presumed on old friendship for a welcome, although not invited."

"Don't yew say that, John. You're allers invited, and you're allers welcome."

"I hear you have been marrying, Tom."

"Ya—as, John, I've been an' gone and done it, I have. Been married most a year."

"And where is she now?"

"Waal, the fact is, yew see, there's a picnic down here about four mild, and as I couldn't go, she's gone with another feller—that is, I mean, a friend of mine. Law! she's a putty gal, John!"

In due time the lady returned, and John found that she was, as Thomas had said, a "putty gal;" and that in marrying him, she had by no means cut off the attentions of many of her old admirers. That she had married him for his money, and that she had no more affection for him than if he had been, what he really was, simply her banker; and that happiness did not reign in that house, became so soon apparent to the eye of John Jackson, that he condensed the seven days into three, and left, sadder and wiser, with the sharp rattle of Mrs. Thomas Jackson's termagant tongue ringing so in his ears, that made him thank his lucky stars that he had been the rejected suitor of Miss Lucy Smith.

He did sometimes wonder what had become of Lucy; and as he never had heard a word from N—— since he left, he very naturally supposed she had married some one else, and was happy. He hoped so. However, such was not the case. Her marriage with Harry Bailey had been postponed, from time to time, for various reasons. Her mother had died; then, a few months later, and about three months before John Jackson's return, her father had also died; and it was then discovered that Mr. Smith was insolvent through recent speculations. Not one penny was left for his daughters, and their

only alternative was to take up their abode with a spinster aunt, whose disposition was not the most amiable, and whose ideas of strict propriety were so much at variance with the daughters of the late Mr. Smith, that their life there was not so pleasant as it might have been. Add to this that the dashing Harry Bailey, finding he was not likely to marry an heiress in Miss Lucy Smith, had discontinued his attentions in that quarter; and rumor was current to the effect that he was shortly to wed another.

As this is but a "plain, unvarnished tale," it is unnecessary to enter into the feelings of Lucy and her sister; how they talked together, planned together, wept together, and fretted and despaired together, as much as it was possible for any two young ladies to do, so cruelly and shamefully abused by Fate, and their aunt.

Well, John Jackson returned to town, to his store, his warehouses, and his office. His travels abroad had not been all in vain, as travels never are, yet to him it seemed as if life itself were almost purposeless. Business, however, would soon make him forget folly and romance, which were totally unsuited to a man of his years. He found an accumulation of letters, and with their perusal he immediately employed himself. The contents of most of them would, doubtless, be more or less interesting; but one only shall be selected as pertinent to this story. It read thus:

"N——, August 10th, 18—

"MR. JOHN JACKSON—*Dear Sir*—You will remember when you were at N——, some three years ago, you did me the honor to make me a proposal of marriage, which I did not at that time accept. Circumstances, which I will briefly enumerate, have since caused me to change my mind, and if you are still willing to take me as I am, I am ready to become your wife. The death of my parents has rendered both my sister and myself homeless and penniless. We are at present living with an aunt, whose extremely unpleasant disposition makes our existence here insuperable. We have thought of many ways of endeavoring to support ourselves; but we are, neither of us, fitted to do work, nor to teach anything but music, and this we cannot do, as our piano was sold; and it would be useless to try to persuade pupils to come to this inferno, even if we had an instrument. I have learned that you are expected home soon, and I entreat you as soon as you return to come and see us. Have pity on us and take us away from this frightful place.

"I am yours, truly, LUCY SMITH."

"No, you don't!" cogitated John Jackson. "I am not to be taken in the toils at my time of life. One would think, by the tenor of your letter, that you wished me to marry both of you. No, my charming girl, I love you, but I value my own honor and peace of mind a trifle."

He was thinking of cousin Tom!

For three days John Jackson was missing. At the end of that time he returned to town, was once more immersed in the details of business, and seemed the John Jackson of years ago. By the next post Miss Lucy Smith was the recipient of the following note:

"New York, August 25th, 18—.

"MY DEAR MISS SMITH—I am pained to learn of your irreparable losses. Among my other property I have a furnished house in N—, of which you and your sister can take immediate possession. I have also placed in the bank at N—, twelve thousand dollars, which is at your disposal. It is on interest at five per cent., and will afford you fifty dollars per month. You can call on my agent, Mr. Hall, whom you know, and he will deliver you the key of the house, and arrange any other matters you may require. You may consider the money a loan, if you wish, and the house as rented. I may as well say that I have changed my mind in regard to matrimony, as I find that opposite interests do not harmonize. There is a good piano in the house, and if you are successful, you can earn enough for your support. Do not let any false delicacy prevent you from taking possession of the house, or using the money. It is absolutely yours, either as a loan, or as a present, as you may desire. As soon as I have attended to business requiring my urgent attention, I will run up to N— and see how you and Maggie are getting along.

"I am yours, truly,

J. J."

This was not exactly as Lucy wished, and still she was not sorry, as, in her heart, she did not desire to marry John Jackson.

"It will not be right to take this money," she said to Margaret; "nor to take possession of the house, when we have no means to pay the rent."

Margaret thought otherwise. "The money was a loan. They could pay rent for the house as soon as they began to earn money by teaching music."

"He might have come down and seen us, Maggie, and then people would know the truth and think no harm. Now, if we go there, there will be no end of gossip."

"Let us go and see Mr. Hall, at all events,"

said Margaret. "People can then only say that we have rented the house of him."

So Maggie prevailed, and they went to the agent, who was not long in showing them to their new home. They had no desire to return to their aunt's after they had once seen the interior of Mr. Jackson's house. It was furnished with full regard to their comfort and happiness; and, although this had been done in the short space of four or five days, it seemed to them a paradiso after their late home.

A few pupils were obtained, and they began to look forward to a future of cheerful independence, freed from the taunting invectives and the shrill-toned lectures of their aunt. A month passed away. Three pupils were found, and by another month they hoped to be able to obtain enough to pay their rent, in addition to what they required for their expenses. They had been obliged to use a portion of the money, so kindly placed in the bank for them by Mr. Jackson, but they hoped to be able to repay that also in time. A young man, by the name of George Ashland, who had been showing some attentions to Margaret, and who had remained staunch through all their troubles, came to see them occasionally, and to his kind attentions they were very much indebted for their success in obtaining pupils.

One evening, as they were sitting very quietly in the parlor, before the lamps were lighted, a figure came up the walk and rang the bell. This figure proved to be Mr. John Jackson, and by no means a bad figure either. He was greeted with a warmth that was pleasant, indeed, to a man in a cool October evening. Maggie, with her warm heart and rattling tongue, hardly gave him an opportunity to speak. Lucy, remembering the *lang syne*, was more shy; but when she felt her hand so gently pressed, she knew that the old passion was not all dead yet. How changed he was, too! The brusque John Jackson of former days had become a fine Parisian gentleman, of correct manners, pleasing address, but with the same kind heart as ever. Lucy had also changed; but the change with her had been from light-hearted girlhood to a womanhood of sorrow and reflection.

"You are doing well, Mr. Hall tells me?" he said.

"Yes," said Lucy, after waiting for Maggie to give a reply, which she did not seem disposed to do; "we are doing much better than we expected. We hope soon to be able to repay our loan, and pay our rent."

"Pshaw! you did not use to think of these things. You are getting to be quite a woman of business. Do you keep an account of your expenses?"

"Oh, yes, sir! I have a book, and put everything down. Sometimes I forget an item, but I balance my book every night, and then if there is an error it is discovered."

"I declare you are getting on amazingly. And about how much per week are your expenses?"

"Last week they were five dollars; but this week they were eight, because I had to get me a pair of shoes."

"Five dollars! A whole week on five dollars? How could you do it? Tell me, could you go on economizing like that forever?"

"I have no ambition now but to earn a living."

"Oh!" said Margaret, "I assure you we do not live so bad on five dollars a week. We have beef-steak and mutton-chop—and Lucy cooks it."

"Cooks it, does she? She's one of a thousand. And now, tell me, girls, how do you like earning your own living?"

"Oh! it's splendid!" shouted Maggie. (She had a lover to make life happy to her.) "There's nothing like it. We get a little tired, now and then; and I am sometimes afraid that Lucy will get sick with too much work; but then, we go to bed early, and are well rested by morning."

"And you bought a pair of shoes? Let me see them." Lucy brought them to him. "How much did they cost?"

"Three dollars."

"Your own earnings? I venture to say they are the first you ever bought with your own earnings. Dear little shoes!" John looked as if he was about to kiss them.

There was a resumption of the old rides and walks the next day, and the dear old avenues looked prettier than ever. Had John Jackson come to her three years ago as he came now, Lucy felt her answer might have been different. In her heart she wished that she had married him then.

Three days passed away very rapidly, it seemed to John, and the time was at hand when he must return. Maggie and George had gone out for a moonlight ramble. John and Lucy were alone.

"Lucy," said he, "I must say good-by. I have been thinking of going to Europe again. Do you think you can get on without any difficulty now?"

"Oh! yes; I think so."

There was a slight hesitation in her speech, which said more than words.

"Remember, the money and the house are yours. That, however, need not prevent your going on as you have done, and earn your own living. I hope you will do well. There is no doubt you will marry soon. I am going to my hotel now, and I shall leave in the morning. Good-by!"

John's voice was very husky, and toward the last he fairly choked; but he managed the "good-by" with considerable firmness.

"Not just yet," Lucy pleaded, "Mr. Jackson! I can never sufficiently thank you for your disinterested kindness to Margaret and me. I have done nothing to deserve it. I have only deserved your displeasure. I have been a giddy, thoughtless girl; but, oh! do not despise me quite. I have prayed for a better heart, and I do hope my prayer will be heard. Before you go, I want to hear you say that you forgive me for any unhappiness I may have caused you."

"Forgive you, Lucy? Surely I have nothing to forgive you. You have done nothing to displease me. On the contrary, your fearless battle against poverty has pleased me more than you can know. I am proud of you. I am proud to own you as an acquaintance. For the past I blame you nothing. You had a right to refuse my hand. I was foolish to believe that one so young and beautiful as you would wed a man like me. It is rather you who should forgive me and my presumption. I do not wonder that you do not wish to marry a man of forty-three."

"Have you forgotten," whispered Lucy, "that I wrote you, saying that I had changed my mind, and that I would now accept your offer?"

"Lucy! That was not for John Jackson—that was for John Jackson's money. Had I married you three months ago, you would not have been the trustworthy, honest girl you are to-day!"

"Too true! too true!" sobbed Lucy.

"If you could love me, if you can take plain John Jackson, as he would be without wealth, to share life with me through weal or woe, then do I now offer you my hand."

"Dear John! I will take it, and, God willing, I will make you a devoted wife, in poverty or in wealth; and I will never forget that I was once so poor I had to earn my own shoes!"

When John Jackson went to Europe, Lucy, his wife, went with him.

WHAT CAME OF MY JEALOUSY.

BY EMMA GARRISON JONES.

It was a misty, yet sweet, September night. I can see the sky as it hung over our cottage home, starry blue, with here and there a patch of white, floating gossamer; and the harvest-moon coming up and flooding all the world with golden splendor. I remember how the crimson roses hung above the door-way, heavy with their own sweetness; and what suggestive odors floated up from the flower-beds in the dim, old garden. I can even remember the dress I wore, pure white, because that was the dress in which my husband loved me best. Did he love me at all? Or was it my yellow gold that won him?

Immediately after our marriage we went to Europe, where we rambled about for a year or two, wintering in Rome, and spending our summers amid the Alps. Then we returned home. But the nomadic spirit was still upon us, and we took what our own country afforded in the way of gipsy life. In the midst of this wandering, in a little country town amid the lakes, my first trouble came. On the second day of our sojourn at this place, to which we had come in accordance with my husband's wish, I missed him. He was fishing for trout, one of our party suggested; and in the afternoon we strolled down toward the stream. Passing a small cottage, we heard voices, and something familiar made me glance that way. There they stood, side by side, my husband and a woman—a young woman, with glossy, raven hair! I passed on in silence; but that night, when my husband returned and sought me, I was reserved and cold. I refused to dance, and would not sing for him. He followed me from place to place, his eyes full of grave solicitude. The instant we were in our own room, he caught my hands in his.

"My darling," he said, "what troubles you?"

For my life I could not tell him. I was

afraid to let him know that I doubted his integrity.

"Horace," I questioned, timidly, "do you love me?"

His fine eyes opened wide with astonishment. But he answered passionately,

"Love you? Ay, better than you will ever know, Violet."

"Did you—have you ever loved any one else?" I faltered.

"Never, Violet, on my honor."

I was happy, yet not entirely satisfied. I was a woman. Eve ate the forbidden fruit with Paradise all around her.

"Then who was it," I faltered, "that woman—I saw you with—this afternoon?"

He started, and flushed very red for a moment, then he laughed.

"Oh!" he said, "jealous, are you? Then I am sure you love me. But, seriously, dear, I ought to have apologized for my long absence. That woman was a friend, an old friend of mine—she's in distress, and I had to help her. Are you satisfied?"

I nodded my head in assent, yet my heart was not quite at rest. After that we went down to our little sea-home, and settled into sober, married life; and for months our bliss was perfect; and then that dreadful night came!

Horace had been gone all day. He did not come home to dinner, as was his custom; so, after having ordered tea, I dressed myself, and sat down on the rose-shaded porch to await him. Sunset, dusk, evening; the moon soaring up above the sea! Still he did not come. Dinner and supper had both spoiled; the flowers in my hair were fading, and I was sick and weary with waiting and suspense. Horace had never remained away so long since our marriage. What could detain him so? Very slowly the night went by. Twelve o'clock came, the

moon dropped out of sight, leaving me in darkness. An owl hooted from the top of the old willow, and the surf beat with a weary, sobbing sound.

I worked myself up into a perfect tremor of alarm and nervous excitement, and by degrees the old doubt, or fear, or whatever it was, stole back to my mind. My husband was cruel to keep me in such suspense. He did not love me! It never occurred to me that he might be detained against his will. When, at last, the clock was on the stroke of three, I caught the quick tramp of his horse's feet. But it did not greatly relieve me. I felt angry, and instead of running down to meet him, as my woman's nature prompted me, I yielded to my petted, wayward will, and kept my seat. He did not stop to take down the bars, but cleared them with a leap. When he reached the porch, he sprang down, flushed and eager.

"Violet," he cried, the moment he caught sight of me, "are you up yet? I am so sorry."

He approached, both hands extended. But I turned from him, and walked to the other end of the porch.

He stood for a moment in silent astonishment, then followed, and took my hand, though I kept my face persistently averted.

"Violet," he said, "what is it? Are you ill, tired? I was so sorry to keep you waiting, but circumstances——"

"Never mind the circumstances now!" I exclaimed, pettishly. "I am very tired, and now that I know you are safe, I will go to bed."

He loosened his hold on my hand, but looked after me, as I left him, with a glance I shall never forget. I can see him now, as he stood in the moonlight, so handsome and noble: and I loved him so well! I wonder why I turned from him that night. God knows how it pained me. But the spoiled, willful temper, that has been my ruin, urged me on.

Did you ever speak a harsh word to one you love, and feel something within you prompting you to speak another? Then you understand how it was that I left my husband standing there, weary and supperless.

"Violet, dear," he said, softly, as I paused involuntarily at the head of the stairs, "come back and let me explain; you know I have not kept you waiting willingly."

But I went on without a word, not to our chamber, but to a little dressing-room exclusively my own, and closed and locked the door. I am sure the Evil One must have had control of me that night. In a little while he came up stairs, and tried the lock of my door; then he

called my name softly; but I did not answer—and he went away.

A dozen times that night I lifted my throbbing head from my tear-wet pillow to go out to him and implore his forgiveness, but pride kept me back. Thus I lay, sleepless, till morning. It was a wild morning, too, with drifting rain and sobbing winds, and the sea thundering on the strand.

My husband was already in the breakfast room when I went down. He turned, and said kindly,

"Good-morning, dear. Are you quite well?"

"Quite well, thank you," I responded, crossing to a window on the opposite side of the room. He arose, and I hoped he was coming to my side, but he only looked at his watch, and said,

"Be kind enough to let me have breakfast at once, Violet, if you can. I am in a hurry, for I have important matters to look after."

I rang the bell at once, and placed myself at the head of the table. When the cheerless repast was over, and my husband rose to go, I felt the hot tears blinding me. I could not let him leave me in anger. I had made a step toward him when he spoke, and his words roused all my old anger and discontent.

"Violet," he said, "I may not be here to dinner. Don't wait for me; it is impossible——"

"Make no excuses, sir," I replied, haughtily; "none are needed."

Oh! those sad, reproachful eyes! But his lips uttered no retort. He only said, "Good-by, dear," and went out.

I watched him from the window, hidden behind a curtain, as he rode away through the driving rain.

The memory of that day comes back to me like a terrible dream! Toward evening my agony became unendurable; and as the rain poured in torrents, I determined to drive over to my husband's office in the neighboring village. About half-way, we met a covered carriage, containing a lady and gentleman.

"Why, that's Mr. Reade!" exclaimed my driver, as the vehicle dashed past us.

One glance confirmed his words. It was my husband, and by his side was the same woman that I had seen with him once before. My resolution was taken on the instant. I ordered my servant to drive back to Swan's-Nest. I would not wait my husband's return, I said to myself: I could not even charge him with his infidelity: I would go away at once, and never let him see my face again.

In a short time I was ready for my departure.

I wrote a note for Horace, telling him that I believed our marriage had been an unwise one, and that I should be happier with my own friends. I begged him not to hunt me down as a fugitive; but to leave me to follow the bent of my inclination. I put the note upon his table, and then went out from the home, where my life had been so happy. In less than a week, my father and I were on our way to Europe.

At the expiration of two wretched years we returned; and I learned from our lawyer that my husband had sailed for China, first making over to me, in fee simple, all his real estate. He never, so the lawyer said, expected to return. I went back to Swan's-Nest. Everything was unchanged. The rooms were just as I had left them. My husband would not let them be touched, the housekeeper said. "Had she ever heard from him?" I asked. "Only once," she replied, "and then the letter contained another; it was on my dressing-table." I went for it myself, and read it, sitting there in our old room.

"Violet," it began, "you must pardon this intrusion. It will be the last, for, in all human probability, the disease that now consumes me will soon give me a grave in a foreign land. But there are a few things I wish to say before I die. I was wrong not to explain all to you from the first. But I desired to spare you what you might consider a disgrace. I thought you could and would trust me. It was my sister you saw. She was vain and frivolous, and eloped with a profligate. The marriage was illegal, and Ethel was disgraced. She came to me for help. I could not refuse her. I was taking her to a safe asylum when I was absent that night. You understand it all now. Don't be troubled, dear, but forget me, and be happy. My sister is dead now, and I have not, I fear.

long to live. God bless you, dear! In heaven all these wrongs will be righted."

For two years I lived alone at Swan's-Nest—two years of inexpressible agony; then the news came! A steamer, homeward bound from Calcutta, was lost, and Horace Reade was one of the passengers. That was the death of hope!

Another year dragged by. One sweet May evening I strolled down to the sea-shore. The sun was setting in waves of gold and purple, and a full moon came up, flooding the great sea, and the long stretch of glittering sand, with misty splendor. The tide rolled in with a low, musical murmur. I sat down on a rock.

Far out upon the bar, a stately vessel swung at anchor, and a little boat from it was coming in. I watched the tiny craft with a kind of fascination. Presently it grated on the sand, and a man sprang ashore.

A wild, nameless hope took shape in my heart. I arose and tottered forward, blind, and half-unconscious. The instant after a strong arm clasped me.

I looked up into the face above me. It was wan, and worn, and changed by suffering, but I knew it in an instant.

"Oh, Horace! my husband!" I cried, "forgive me."

Then I felt his tears upon my cheek, his kisses on my lips. The happy world, drowned in the splendor of the spring sunset, faded out, and I sunk into his arms insensible.

It is all over, the remorse, the loneliness, the aching pain! We live at Swan's-Nest, my dear, forgiving husband and myself.

"I had engaged my passage," he said, "in the steamer that was lost. But I fell ill, and could not come then; and that sickness has restored me to you, thank God!"

I thank Him also, daily and hourly, for this, undeserved, this perfect bliss.

"JOCK O' HAZELDEAN."

BY DAISY VENTNOR.

It wanted but a few days of Christmas, and yet Jack Hazeldean, who usually came to spend a month with me, at that season of the year, had not arrived. Jack was an artist, with but slender means, though a half imbecile lad, a nephew, was all that stood between him and a great inheritance. I was many years older than Jack, and something of an invalid, so that I had come to depend on these visits for much of my news of the great world without.

Suddenly I heard a stamping in the hall, the door opened, and Jack stood before me.

"It's a beastly night," said he, shaking the wet from his overcoat, like a shaggy dog. "I'm glad to see such a roaring fire!"

"And I'm glad to see you," I said. "But go and get on dry clothes, and then we'll have dinner."

At dinner Jack was unusually silent. Something, I saw, was the matter. When the servants were gone, I looked up, and said,

"Come, Jack, what is it? You're in trouble. Make a clean breast of it, my lad."

He paused a moment, then took from his sketch-book a picture, which he gave me, silently, across the table. It was such a lovely, lovely face; a girl of not more than seventeen, looking out from a profusion of water-lily leaves, like Undine—a face, rare, not so much for its beauty as from its look of pure and perfect innocence. Under the face a name was written, but it did not need that clue to make me exclaim,

"Myra! little Myra Roslyn! Jack, where did you light upon that child?"

"Then you know her? I remember now, she said you used to know her mother. Is she not lovely—little Myra?"

His grave face softened into a beautiful smile, as, rising, he came and gazed over my shoulder at the picture. And, standing just there, in one of his grand, picturesque attitudes, leaning against the carved mantle, with now softened tones, and now harsh, broken ones, Jack Hazeldean told his story.

During Jack's last visit to me, at Preston Hill, in June, he had, as was his invariable custom, gone sketching every day. On one occasion, however, he had taken a rod and

line. About five miles off, he came to a lovely nook at a bend in the river. He threw in his line, and lounged away under the old trees, half asleep, when he became suddenly aware of a lovely, Naiad-like face looking up curiously at him from the placid, blue water. It seemed to have no background, except trees and leaves, and for an instant Jack persuaded himself that it really was some fair mermaid, whom he had awakened from her dreams, instead of a reflection of somebody behind him in the stream. And then he turned quietly about, and looked up into Myra Roslyn's face.

"I thought it was Undine, but I see it is Hebe," said he, gravely.

The young girl crimsoned a soft, vivid blush, that dyed her neck and throat.

"Oh, sir! I did not suppose that you could see me, and you did not hear me, for I came up very softly. I beg your pardon."

"And I yours," he said, springing up, hat in hand, for he thought she looked pained and frightened; "but I very much wish that you would let me sketch your face, just as it looked out of the water there. You can't imagine how picturesque it was."

Her blue eyes opened, like a child's, in surprise.

"My face? Then you are an artist, a painter, perhaps? Oh! could you let me see some of your sketches? I have so longed to see a living painter."

Jack was so struck with her shy simplicity that he did not even smile, as he gave her his port-folio, saying, "You will not find much there; I don't carry my best ones, you know, for fear of losing them. And while you are looking at it, have I your permission to sketch yourself as a mermaid, for instance?"

The girl gave the required permission with simple gravity, and lost all recollection, apparently, of the artist while looking at his sketches. She was exquisitely lovely—a very wood-nymph; and Jack began to wonder how he should find out her name.

"Will that do?" said he, at last, laying the picture in her lap.

"Oh! you have flattered it!" she exclaimed, simply. Without a word, he took her hand, gently, and led her to the water's edge.

"Look," said he. She gave a glance downward; then a little, low laugh.

"Yes," said she, "it really is like me; I never thought I was half so pretty." Jack bit his lips to avoid a smile.

"I am glad that you are pleased, and I cannot thank you enough for letting me take it; it is a study for an Undine then. I have been wanting for a long time. What shall I write under it—it must have a name, you know?"

"Undine, of course!" with a mischievous smile. Then, resuming her simple gravity, "No, put my name—Myra."

"Myra? Nothing else?" said Jack.

"As you like—my name is Myra Roslyn." After which announcement, Jack felt in duty bound to give his own name and visiting place. "Yes," Myra said, "she knew Mr. Preston; at least, he used to know her own mamma." And after that the pair glided off into the most cozy and comfortable chat imaginable; Jack, fascinated with her beauty and artless ways; and she, looking at him with a child's awe for a painter, or great man. He found that she had taste and appreciated art; and when she rose, saying good-by, he ventured to propose that she should let him give her a few lessons in drawing. Myra's lovely face glowed with pleasure,

"Would you—will you, if it will not be too great a bore?" she hesitated. "Oh, sir! it would be such an enjoyment to me!"

"And to me," said Jack, in that calm, true voice of his, that, somehow, always convinces you that he means every word.

"I could come down here—I mean," correcting herself; "I do come here every morning, nearly, to read, after my music-lesson, and then, if you will be so very, very kind."

He was more than thanked for his offer by the glowing, blushing smile that made Myra's face a perfect picture; and with another "good-by," the young girl sprang up the bank, and left him.

It is but an old, old story, after all, that Jack told me, and yet he told it beautifully. No wonder that he stole little Myra's heart away with those low, musical tones of his! He employed his four weeks well, I must say, for long ere they drew to a close, he had taken that fair child into the heart that no woman had ever touched before. But with his chivalrous notions it seemed wrong, even cruel to him, to brush the bloom from so fair a flower by a premature disclosure of his love; besides, doubts began to assail him, and he feared that she would think him too old for her fresh girl-

hood, for Jack was, at least, ten years her senior; so they parted with it all unsaid, unless what his fond eyes may have unconsciously betrayed. But before he left her, he gave her his town address, and begging her not to forget her friend and teacher, told her also that when trouble or sorrow touched her to send him a little line, and he would come. "Promise me this," he said, eagerly, at parting. She looked down, for she could not face him just then, and whispered that she would. Then they parted.

And now let Jack finish his own story; only it's a pity that I cannot give you his tones and gestures, they were fully half of it.

"Four weeks ago, Preston, I came home late from Mrs. Fletcher's reception, and on my table I found a little note from Myra. It was very short and simple, calling me her 'kind friend,' and begging my advice, for her father and mother—step-mother, you know—had determined upon her marrying an ugly, cruel, rich man, whom she would rather die than wed! Poor little child! I felt as if I had done her cruel wrong by not claiming her sooner; and my blood fairly boiled—it's pretty cool blood, you know, and not given to high tragedy; but it boiled then, at the idea of that cold-hearted tale of flesh and blood. Early in the morning I started off, and by noon I was at Roslyn house. The servant, quite an old man, who answered my ring, said, 'Yes, Miss Myra was in;' and eyed me closely as he hobbled along the dark hall, and showed me into a small room, muttering loud enough for me to hear, 'This is another sort o' gentleman; thank heaven, he's come at last!' Such a forlorn, wretched room, Preston; I never imagined that the Roslyns were so reduced in circumstances. Then the door opened suddenly, and Myra, with a gasping sob, laid both her hands in mine, 'Oh, my friend!' she cried, 'I know, I knew you would come! Tell me what to do, for I cannot, oh, never——' and down came her tears. 'Myra, my darling,' said I, 'there is just one place in this world for you, and that is here;' and I laid her little golden head on my breast. You won't care to listen to the rest; but in that brief half-hour I found that Myra's happiness was bound up in me, as mine was in her. Such a loving, pure little soul as it is! I told her that I had come to ask her father's consent to our engagement, and she agreed to my seeing him; but she trembled from head to foot when she mentioned (what we had both forgotten) the name of the man they want her to marry. It was—Broughton Ames."

I was surprised into an emphatic inquiry if they were all gone mad!

"Very possibly," said Jack, with a fierce laugh at my unusual vehemence; "yes, that wicked, old profligate, and no other. If I am too old for the child, think what *he* is; older than you by ten years, Preston, and twenty years older in sin. It's an utterly abominable transaction, and ought not to be sanctioned in a Christian country. I find, by careful inquiry, that old Roslyn's gaming debts are at the bottom of the bargain. Well, I saw her father, and there is a bare chance that I might have succeeded, but Mrs. Roslyn, cold, handsome, and heartless, came in, and effectually put a stop to any softening on her husband's part. She said that 'I did them much honor, but Mr. Ames was an old friend, and had long been promised Myra's hand.' All my protests—and some were warm ones—glanced off that woman as off marble; and she even refused to let me see Myra again. But as I went through the hall, I heard my darling's voice—God bless her!—from the landing above me, saying, 'I will be true to you, unless I die!' The poor, old servant, who was conducting me out, shook his head, and whispered, 'I'm wearying for her, the day, *puir bairn!*' I slipped a little money into his hand, and told him to be kind to her; then left the house."

Here Jack paused again; dashed his segar on the hearth, and went on more vehemently than ever.

"Preston, I tell you, that since that day, for four weeks, I have endured positive agony. Her face, her angel face, has haunted me day and night, and I have tried vainly to devise some scheme to rescue her. This morning another of her little notes came, and I set off once more to try and move Mrs. Roslyn. Of course, it was useless; but I contrived to learn from them the day fixed for the wedding. It is actually set for the twenty-sixth—next Saturday morning. And although they would not let me see her, I contrived to slip a letter into old Robert's hand for her, telling her that I was, at least, near at hand. 'Ay,' said the old man, as he fumbled at the lock of the door, 'I'll gie it to her, never fash yourself'. But, *puir bairn*, it's a weary bride they'll have, I'm thinking; for she does naething but greet, greet a' day and night.'"

Jack stopped here. I looked at him, meaningly, and began to sing, in an undertone,

"But aye she let the tears down fa'
For Jock o' Hazeldean!"

Jack's eyes sparkled.

"Yes, Preston, there's nothing else to be done but to run away; and that's the precious business that I've come down to consult you about."

"Advice to people who have already made up their own minds is a pure waste of words," said I, after reflecting awhile. "But will you let me try and manage this affair for you?"

His hand closed firmly on mine, and his calm voice shook a little, as he answered,

"You have ever been my best friend. Do you think I distrust you now?"

"Very well, then. The only thing for you to do is to keep quiet here, and to-morrow I will issue invitations for a ball at Preston Hill, on Christmas-eve. I would make it a day later, but I fear that the Roslyns would not come, or let Myra, on the evening before her wedding, for Jack must have a chance to arrange matters with her, and they will watch her too closely to let you do so, except in some such way. In a crowd you may claim an ordinary acquaintance's privilege, and Mrs. Roslyn will not dare make a scene in *my* house. Your elopement must not be until the very last moment. Get Myra's consent, and we will see that the sleigh which is to carry her, as they think, to the door of St. John's church, on Saturday, has my mares, Psyche and Maida, before it; and then, if you should happen, by some mysterious chance, to join the party; it's not very far to the ferry, and once over it, you are in New York, and can get married at the first parson's."

Up sprang Jack, and wrung my hand until I implored him to stop.

"Pshaw!" said I, "that's nothing; only do not kill Maida and Psyche if you can help it. There isn't a match for them in upper Jersey, I think, fine as our horses are; though I have heard Ames boast of a very fast pair of trotters. And now, will you be so obliging as to tell me what you and Myra expect to live upon?"

"Love and art! Stop, Preston; don't make me sigh for Clarence's death, or uncle Denbigh's coffers. If I secure her, I shan't mind how hard I have to work. I must learn to be economical, that's all;" and with the hearty hand-pressure that told of more deep feeling than he could ever bring his reticent lips to disclose, Jack walked off to bed.

My housekeeper looked amazed and rather disturbed, the next day, when I announced to her my intention of giving a ball on Christmas-eve; but, knowing of old that my whims were many, she only ventured upon a hone

that the excitement would not prove too much for my "nerves," and retired. But old James, my coachman, being a privileged person, did utter a remonstrance, when I ordered the carriage to go over to the Roslyns.

"If it be fur that there ball," said he, "better let James take over a bit o' note, sir. Why, you'll take your death, this weather, sir, and to be sure! fur us to go and call at them Roslyns! It were different with the first one—she were a Renyolds, and the Renyolds be nice folks; but this madam, they do say, be nobody, and what with——" but, in obedience to my nod of dismissal, old James' indignation exhaled upon the stairs.

It was rather a long drive, and I found it both cold and tedious. But Mr. and Mrs. Roslyn received me with great politeness, and (until I delivered my own invitation,) unmistakable surprise at my making the exertion to call on them. I asked for Myra.

"I don't know whether the dear girl will feel equal to coming down," said Mrs. Roslyn, smoothly; "she has been so very busy, and has a bad headache to-day."

"Still," said I, persuasively, "I hope you will tell Miss Myra that I am here; I have not seen her, even at church, in a very long time."

Accordingly, the step-mother left the room and returned in a few moments, bringing Myra with her. The child's eyes were red and swollen, and she was excessively pale. My heart ached for the poor little thing, and I rose to shake hands with her.

"For your mother's sake, my dear," said I, holding her trembling hand firmly in mine, "I hope that you will not refuse an old man's invitation to the first ball he has ever given. And (that you may not think I have forgotten your approaching wedding-day) I have taken the liberty of bringing you a gift," and I put a jewel-case in her hand, containing a necklace and bracelets of rare old pearls that had once belonged to my mother. Her father came up immediately and took the ornaments from her to show them to Mrs. Roslyn. I improved the chance to slip a bit of paper in her hand. The change that came over her whole face was electrical, as she rapidly read its contents. They were the last verse of a certain Scotch song, written in Jack's bold handwriting:—

"The kirk was decked at morning-tide,
The tapers glimmered fair,
And priest and bridegroom wait the bride,
But, ah! no bride was there!
They sought her bath by bower and ha',
The lady was not seen;
She's o'er the border, and awa'
Wi' Jack o' Hazeldean!"

Myra understood, as if by intuition. "Tell him I will do whatever you and he wish," she whispered, and then turned quickly to examine the pearls again. "Of course," said I, aloud, "Miss Myra has consented, Mr. Roslyn," and, I added, joining the group, "and I hope she will honor my pearls by wearing them at my ball."

Then, not daring to stay longer, lest Myra should betray herself, I made my adieu; but the last throbbing clasp of little Myra's hot fingers stayed with me all through the long drive, and I made Jack's calm face quiver by telling him of them at dinner.

My ball was to be on Thursday night, and all that day it snowed furiously. But so seldom was Preston Hill thrown open for such an entertainment, that the house was full comparatively early. At last came the group for which I had been watching, and with them, too, Broughton Ames. The man was my detestation, and I could see Jack's shiver of disgust, as we exchanged salutations. On her father's arm, my pearls on her fair, alabaster skin, her lovely Hebe face lit with a look of wistful appeal, most touching to behold, was Myra. I took pointed notice of the little girl, introduced her to half a dozen New York fellows who were lounging around; and then I walked off to join Jack.

"The game's in your own hands now; I need not tell you to improve opportunities," said I, as I passed him. He gave a nod of assent.

By some chance, half an hour after, I happened to be standing near Myra, as Jack and Ames both approached her.

"This is our dance, Miss Roslyn," said Jack, in his quiet, gentlemanly voice. It seemed to exasperate Ames, however.

"Myra," said the latter, out loud, "I positively *forbid* your dancing with that fellow!"

Ames had evidently been drinking, and the men in our vicinity laughed outright at his tipsy attitude of defiance. "That fellow" gave a contemptuous glance down at him, (Jack was a whole head taller than his antiquated rival,) and calmly offered his arm to Myra. She gave Ames a look of indignation, and turned away, clinging to Jack as if she would never let him go. Ames swore a furious oath, looked up, caught my eye; and then sulked off to the supper-room, and drank more champagne than ever.

By the time that Mrs. Roslyn began to frown and look uneasy, Jack conveyed Myra back to my side, and asked me to take her to her step-mother.

"Mr. Preston," said she, as we walked along, her sweet face coloring like a rose, "I have promised to do everything I have been told to do. I hope God will forgive me for disobeying my father; but I cannot, I cannot marry that dreadful, drunken old man."

"Never fear, my dear," said I, "extraordinary circumstances demand extraordinary remedies. Keep up your courage, little one," and then we were at Mrs. Roslyn's chair.

The ball went on as most balls do. Jack kept carefully away from Myra; and she danced and danced untiringly, until their carriage came, and her step-mother called Ames, who was now pitifully drunk, to take Myra out.

"Permit me," said I, offering my arm, for I saw the child turn pale and tremble.

"You are very kind," said Mrs. Roslyn; "I hope, Mr. Preston, that you will not fail us on Saturday morning, at St. John's."

"Be sure I shall not," was my response; but as the lady stepped in front of us, I hummed in Myra's ear, "The kirk was decked at morning-tide!" and had the mischievous satisfaction of seeing the said pretty ear glow suddenly.

The day after the ball—Christmas day—passed in rather a busy, uncomfortable fashion at Preston Hill. I don't think anybody even dreamed of going to church, and I was confined to my room with one of my worst nervous attacks, which I feared was going to prevent my leaving the house the next day. But toward evening I grew better, when Jack came in.

"All arranged?" I asked.

"Yes," said he, smiling. "Your mares will be at the door of the Roslyns, instead of the team that has been hired. I have had to bribe high in order to have them substituted; but the driver has been well paid, and will be faithful. Everything now depends on Myra keeping up her courage."

"Never fear her," I replied. "But you look hungry and tired. Let us have dinner, and then to bed."

"I am tired," I confess," said Jack. "I had to go over into York State, you know, to arrange for a parson; and it has quite fagged me out."

The storm, that continued for three days, ceased at last, and Myra's wedding-morn dawned clear and beautiful.

Myra had managed, with much skill, the part Jack had arranged for her. She had expressed a wish to go to church, on that last occasion, with her father alone, and as the desire was a natural one, the step-mother had assented.

"I will leave the house first," said Mrs. Roslyn, "in order to see that everything at St. John's is right. The stupid sexton may forget to lay the carpet down between the gate and the porch. You can follow ten minutes later. Mr. Ames will come after you, driving his own horses; you know he is to stop at the house to show you his new sleigh."

Dear little Myra! she dressed with trembling fingers, and a beating heart, wondering if her courage would fail her at the crisis.

"Don't fuss your dress," was Mrs. Roslyn's parting injunction. "I am glad to see you so quiet and composed, for, I confess, I expected another flood of tears;" and she swept out of the room, and the next moment the sleigh-bells were heard, as she drove away.

A few minutes of anxious waiting, and then old Robert tapped softly on the door, as he had arranged before with Myra. "Now is the time," he said. "Mr. Ames has gone into the parlor to take a drink, and your father has gone with him. I have shut the door. Walk softly by it, and they'll never hear us."

Myra hurried down stairs, giving a frightened glance as she passed the parlor-door, and soon reached the sleigh, which stood waiting, with the famous mares harnessed to it.

"Good-by, Robert, dear, kind Robert," she said. "Oh! do keep them, for a few minutes, inside."

Robert signed to the driver, and the sleigh moved off at a slow pace at first, until it turned a corner of the road, where stood a tall figure, that Myra knew well, leisurely smoking a cigar.

It took but a second for Jack to spring up, take the driver's place, seize the reins, and let the blooded mares out.

When Ames, five minutes later, came to the door and found from old Robert's confused account, that the bride had concluded not to wait for her father, he was confounded. "Very odd," he said. "Most extraordinary," echoed Mr. Roslyn. The two got into Ames' sleigh hurriedly. Still, neither suspected anything was wrong, till, turning the corner of the road, Ames saw how rapidly the sleigh ahead was going. "By Jove!" he cried, "how those horses foot it. Eh? No. It can't be. Yes, it is," he shouted, excitedly, rising up to have a better look. "They're Preston's mares! I thought I knew their swinging trot. That's Hazeldean driving, too, by the Lord! See, he takes the turn to the ferry. We're outwitted," he cried. "But," with a tremendous oath, "I'll catch the scoundrel yet."

As he spoke, he whistled to his horses in a sharp, quick way, which they know well, and the high-mettled steeds, who were worthy of a better master, stretched their necks to their light collars, and swept on, more like birds flying through the air than four-footed creatures traversing the earth.

The mares, as yet, led by a good half-mile. Jack, looking back, and seeing he was pursued, gave them their heads, and the spirited animals sprang forward as if fully conscious of the struggle before them. The contest now began in earnest. For awhile there was no perceptible advantage on either side. Myra had never before known what it was to go at such a pace, and instinctively she clung, with both hands, to the sides of the sleigh. At times she was almost dizzy from the speed. The long array of trees and fields swept past in one continuous line, like arrows following in flight. The half-submerged fences rushed by as if running off a reel. Four, five, six miles! Only one remained. Down the steepest hills, and up the opposite heights, Jack had kept to his terrible pace, stimulating the mares by voice and word. "Well done, Maida," he cried. "Bravo! Psyche!" he cheered, continually.

Suddenly Maida stumbled.

"Steady," he said, "or we are lost," and lifted her with the reins.

But he felt, for the first time, that he had lost ground.

Myra glanced behind fearfully.

"They gain on us, they gain," she sobbed. "Oh! kill me rather than let me fall into their hands."

Jack looked back also.

"Courage," he cried, and his deep, stern voice rose like a trumpet-call, its very tone reassuring Myra for the moment. "We're almost at the ferry. If the boat is there, we'll foil them yet."

But even as he spoke, the mare stumbled again; and soon after again, and again; each time losing ground. If this continued, she would finally go down! Great drops of perspiration started out on Jack's forehead. Myra was pale as death. Broken prayers rose to her lips and died there paralyzed. Now she glanced, terrified, at their rapidly approaching pursuers. Now she looked up, imploringly, into Jack's face.

"Courage," he cried again, in answer to one of these looks. "We have but a quarter of a mile. The ferry is round the next corner."

"But if the boat shouldn't be there!" said Myra, with white lips.

"Thank God! that's the bell," was the hurried answer. "Now, to get there, before the boat starts!"

As he spoke, they reached the corner. Jack slightly checked his mares to turn it safely. Below, at the foot of the hill, the boat was seen, apparently just about to leave the dock.

Giving a sharp hillo to attract the boatmen's attention, Jack gathered his reins more firmly, and settled himself well in his seat. Then, between his set teeth, he hissed,

"Now, Maida, for life or death!"

With the words, he swung his long lash around, and brought it down, quick and sharp, across the haunches of the mare. Mad with the insult, for she had never felt the whip before, she sprang furiously forward, Psyche keeping stride as frantically.

The runners whizzed down the frozen hill, the snow flying off from them in powdering puffs. There were a few moments of breathless suspense, and then the sleigh grated on the boat.

"Up with the chain! Off with her," cried Jack, leaping from his seat, and running immediately to the chain.

But the ferryman did not wait to be assisted. Bewildered, and overawed, he obeyed; gave the signal to start; and the boat shot out from the dock, the pursuers, as yet, not being in sight.

Now, for the first time, Jack breathed freely. At this moment Ames was seen turning the corner at last. He came at headlong speed, standing up, and shouting to the boat to stop.

But it was too late.

More than that! Whirling around the corner, the sleigh swung far to the left, struck a hidden stone, upset, and pitched Ames head foremost into a snow-bank. Mr. Roslyn, having kept his seat, was not a victim to so great an extent. He soon scrambled out from the wreck, and the last Jack saw of him was his wo-begone and puzzled countenance, directed now toward the receding boat, and now toward the legs of his companion sticking high in air.

Meantime the horses were dashing on at a furious rate, and were only caught later by floundering into a drift, where they stalled themselves, and were caught.

The boat soon landed Jack and his bride on the shores of the neighboring State of New York. Little Myra was fairly

"O'er the border and awa'
Wi' Jock o' Hazeldean."

As all the arrangements had been made the day before, the fugitive pair were speedily married, and long before their pursuers could have followed, even if they had attempted it.

Of course, I never was forgiven for my share in Jack's abominable transactions. I had, after great exertion, managed to get to St. John's church, where I waited, with most exemplary patience, (I cannot say as much for Mrs. Roslyn,) with the other guests, until Ames finally made his appearance; and I must do myself the justice to add, that I bore his wrath and Mrs. Roslyn's vituperations with equal fortitude and indifference.

Jack and Myra had a pretty hard life of it, as far as money goes, for some time; but, oh! how happy they were. People called Jack a fool, until they saw his wife, and then they invariably and basely went over to the enemy, and fell in love with little Myra on the spot. It was curious to see how that child won hearts. Denbigh Hazeldean was devoted to her, and would have had them live at Hazel Court; but no! neither Jack or she would listen to such an arrangement. But one bright June morning, when they were staying at Preston Hill, after

Myra had finally induced her father to forgive her, as Myra sat trying to convince me that a queer, pink object, with blinking eyes, was "the very image of Jack," in marched baby's papa, with so grave a face that we both jumped up in alarm.

"Nothing is the matter, little one," said Jack, throwing an arm around both his treasures, "only Clarence Hazeldean was thrown from his horse, yesterday, and killed instantly."

Myra and I gave an exclamation of horror.

"And uncle Denbigh writes me that he is glad that Hazel Court will now descend, after the old man's death, to those he loves as well as Jack and Myra."

Myra's eyes were overflowing, and Jack's were not dry. I knew how he had been dreading that coming winter.

"It would never have been but for you," whispered Myra, as she kissed me lovingly, with wet cheeks against mine.

"Ha, Myra!" and I pinched her pretty ear to hide my own emotion. "Tell me how often the juvenile heir of Hazel Court will be rocked asleep to the dear old tune of "JOCK O' HAZEL-DEAN."

PUT OUT OF THE WAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE SECOND LIFE."

CHAPTER I.

It was an ominously dull evening, even in Broadway. The rain beat on the top of Miss Hubbard's hackney-coach, and drenched the windows, and shut her and old Mrs. M'Intosh inside into a little jolting cell of gloom and uneasy discomfort. Lotty wiped the foggy pane and peered out, her heart beginning to swell and throb under her neat, little, buttony jacket. New York to her was a jungle, full of corruption and wild beasts, through which, like another innocent Unn, she had to make her way, without any especial lion to protect her.

"Do you think the driver knows the way, aunt Selina?" she said.

"The colonel's own man is beside him, child. We're safe enough."

Mrs. M'Intosh spoke tartly, folding her black shawl over her spare breast, and pinning it tight with the air of a woman prepared for action, and by no means to be taken at advantage. "It would have become Col. Leeds better to have met us himself, instead of sending his lackey to receive the orphan daughter of his old friend; that's my opinion, Charlotte. Or his son—his son ought to be old enough now to know how to be civil. If Ned Leeds lives in the beggarly fashion he used to, from hand to mouth, a rich ward like you will be a godsend to him—he ought to be thankful for it. Why, when that fellow used to come down to your father's, for a month's gunning and fishing, with his diamond rings and flesh-colored gloves, his shirts were only fronts, Charlotte! shams, worn over flannel; and half the time there were no socks under his French boots. You see, I superintended the wash. Oh! I know what Ned Leeds' sort is well!"

"My father always regarded Col. Leeds as a most exquisite gentleman," said Miss Hubbard, stiffly. "He was very proud to call him his friend. You know, aunt Selina, father was but a poor farmer when the colonel boarded with him."

"I know all about it, Lotty," said Mrs. M'Intosh; and then fell into silence, for the cool indifference of their reception bewildered as well as angered her.

Charlotte Hubbard, sole heiress to the great Hubbard lead-mine, was game that did not

often fall to Ned Leeds. To be sure, her property was out of his reach. But the sum set aside by her father to recompense her guardian, for his care of her until she was of age and was introduced into the New York world, was enough, in Mrs. M'Intosh's opinion, to crush that needy gentleman under a load of gratitude. She had received with grim satisfaction, the colonel's courteous letter requesting her to accept the post of chaperon to Miss Hubbard. "A post," he said, "rendered doubly necessary by the fact that my poor house and rough way of living has been so long unsoftened and unrefined by womanly presence." She was quite willing to go in the train of the monied princess. It would be much pleasanter employment to inaugurate decent housekeeping in the rough house, and to oversee giddy Lotty, than to make up the winter dresses of the farmers' and storekeepers' wives about Coldsden. She had kept her own counsel as to her secret opinion of the colonel heretofore. But it was provoked from her now. "To send his lackey," she said again and again. "Ned Leeds' footman laughing at my hair-trunk! But so the wheel goes, up and down!"

Miss Hubbard was dryly silent. But she was disappointed. Secretly, she had regarded herself as worthy of some sort of royal reception. She had been such a hard-worked little girl when her father bought that plat of waste land in Illinois; she had milked, cooked, tied up the radishes for the hucksters, like all the rest of the farmers' daughters. The lead-mine opened a sudden fairy-land of wealth to her. It was the old story of Cinderella over again. She had begun since then to look at her face in the glass through a glamour of romance; and she had supposed Col. Leeds and his associates would do the same.

Suddenly the carriage drew up in front of a house brilliantly lighted from attic to basement.

It was a mansion stately enough, in Lotty's eyes, to make her draw a quicker breath of timid astonishment as she crossed the pavement, and entered the wide arch between the two rounded pillars. But even by gaslight Mrs. M'Intosh's eyes were wide open. She saw that the massive pile was of stone, and not plastered, and that the inlaid floor was of

genuine marble. She caught a glimpse of a dimly-shaded library and dining-room beyond, glittering with lights and silver, before they went up to the drawing-room floor. It was all very like a palace to poor Lotty.

"At least, they have prepared to receive us," said Mrs. McIntosh, complacently.

A grave, elderly gentleman advanced to meet them at the foot of the stairs with outstretched hands.

"And this is Dan Hubbard's daughter," he said. "My daughter now."

And he slowly scanned her from head to foot, and then kissed her hand solemnly.

Lotty felt herself, in some subtle way, appraised and taken into possession. She had never been less her own mistress than in that next moment, when the grave, middle-aged gentleman stood holding her fingers in his white, pulpy hand, and looking, with tears in his eyes, on the ground, said, "You are very like your father, child. But there!" with a forced smile. "This is no time for thoughts like these," giving the other hand to Mrs. McIntosh, "you are both welcome to my poor home. It is old and worn, as you see: it better suits the fortunes of a family gone with it into decay; but its roof was always ready to shelter the orphan. Do not stand any longer on the threshold."

He turned now, and beckoned to a lady in the background.

"This is Mrs. Lusk, my housekeeper," he said. "She will show you to your apartments. Remember," with an impressive glance that took them both in, "this is your home. You command in your apartments as I in mine. I never shall enter them without your permission. I will bid you good-night now. It will be kindest, I am sure, to leave you to repose."

Lotty glanced back at the fatherly face, which watched her as she went up the stairs. She never had seen one more genial and benignant, she thought; and she was ready to cry from nervous joy. She followed aunt Selina in a sort of dream. Mrs. Lusk went before, polished, but austere, like most English servants here. She knew her duties, but she rated properly the plebeian country to which necessity had driven her. She preceded the seared, yet delighted Lotty, through the luxurious dressing-rooms, wide chambers, and boudoir, which occupied the whole left wing of the house.

"This is the suite of apartments set apart for you and Miss Hubbard, madam," she said, stopping at last, and scrupulously addressing

the elder lady. "Miss Hubbard's maid is in waiting. Dinner will be served whenever you desire it."

Now it was about the hour when aunt Selina usually drank her cup of tea, slaked her fire, and went to bed. She rose equal to the occasion, however.

"Is not Miss Hubbard to dine with Col. Leeds?" she said. "I observe that the house is still lighted."

"Col. Leeds entertains a party of gentlemen, to-night," said Mrs. Lusk. She hesitated, and then went on. "I understood, that, as the young lady had not yet made her *debut*, it was her guardian's wish that her meals should be served in her own rooms when there were strangers in the house."

"Ay, indeed! Very well. You may go!" said Mrs. McIntosh, nodding gruffly, by way of showing that she knew how to treat a servant.

As soon as the housekeeper had rustled out, Mrs. McIntosh drew up her skirts and put her feet on the fender. After this, she remained grimly silent until the dinner had been served and eaten. Slight as the repast was, it hinted at mysteries of cooking, to which her skill was but scullion-work. The silver glittered miraculously. The delicate damask was snowier than any ever blanched even in the pure air of Coldsden.

"And this is what Ned Leeds calls rough housekeeping, truly," she growled, as the servant withdrew. "I've dreamed of houses kept like this; but I never thought to find one, and that one Ned Leeds! The man looks as genuine as the house. He wears even his own gray hair. I doubt I'll have to take back what I said of him. Though that's sheer folly, wearing your hair gray when dye's so cheap. It's a parade of honesty, in my notion," with an uneasy smoothing of her own oily black locks.

Lotty made no reply. She was stunned. Dropping so roughly out of her role of princess, into that of a country school-girl, received out of sheer kindness, and to be kept in the nursery until she was old enough not to disgrace her guardian, quite dazed her. She was suddenly miserably conscious of her ignorance and awkwardness, and quite sure that the low place was the rightful one. For Lotty was naturally a humble, simple-hearted girl; and in this new world of stately ceremony, of beauty, music, culture, and quiet ease, the lead-mine, which had so dazzled her, seemed such a wretched heap of poor and common metal!

BREAKFAST was over. Col. Leeds had lingered, sipping his glass of claret, and questioning his ward, as he was wont to do, about her yesterday's lessons, before he retired to his study; but he was gone at last. Mrs. M'Intosh was bearing a sick headache, up in her room, with the grim endurance of an Indian; but still Lotty loitered alone, looking vacantly out into the open square beyond. She turned hastily, as a small, fair-haired young man entered, and rose blushing, as he thought, like the milk-maid that she was.

"Do not go, cousin Lotty," he said, putting out his delicate, ringed hand. "No one can make my tea like you. Besides," as he sat down and daintily disposed his napkin, "you surely need not be always eager to escape to that nunnery of yours up stairs. How is it that you are so devoted to study? Were you actually born different from all of us weak, young people?"

Lotty's hand shook, as she put the sugar in the cup; and the tears rushed to her eyes. "Indeed, cousin Fred, I am more tired than anybody knows," she said. "I might as well be in a nunnery, as you say," checking herself with a half sob.

Young Mr. Leeds shot a shrewd glance at her under his light eyelashes; then he looked her straight in the face tenderly, putting down his fork.

"Is it possible," he said, "that my father has mistaken your wishes? From your letter, before you came, he thought your sole wish was to go on with your studies, and that you desired to avoid all gayety? Is it not so, Lotty?"

Miss Hubbard stammered. "I don't know what I said in my letter," she answered, pettishly. "One ought not to be called to account for every hasty word. I only know that in these two months I have been shut up like a prisoner, and treated like a child. I am tired of English, and French, and music-masters. I want some other amusement than a solemn pace about the square with Mrs. M'Intosh."

"Poor child! You miss the fresh air of the country," he said, compassionately.

Lotty gained courage. "I miss more than that. There is no use in forcing me to study—there never was. I cannot understand books; I have the very dullest brains that ever were made, cousin Frederick." She put her hands up to her forehead, as she spoke, looking into his face with a gravity and distress that would have provoked a smile from any one else. But

young Mr. Leeds only slipped his tea thoughtfully, turning his lightish eyes by turns from Lotty to the omelet before him.

"There has been a sad misunderstanding here," he said, gently, at last. "But, by the terms of your father's will, you are only to remain with us until you are married. I do not see what is to be done. My father is a man of iron will, and he has but little patience with any change of mind."

"Unless—unless you could help me!" impetuously said Lotty. "He can be managed by you, cousin Frederick; he is so tender and devoted to you."

Fred Leeds raised his cup suddenly to conceal his face. When he put it down, he said, "You have quick insight, Lotty. Perhaps you are right. At all events, he cannot object to your breathing fresh air. I will beg leave to drive you out this afternoon. With the dragon, M'Intosh, to mount guard, of course."

"Oh, cousin Fred! You are so good! So good!" and Lotty jumped up and went to stand beside him, her face flushing into prettiness. "You don't know what it is to be a prisoner in the midst of such wonders as there are in New York."

"A prisoner? What nonsense!" said the young man, contracting his eyes. The next few minutes he ate his breakfast in silence; while Lotty assiduously helped him to sugar, or out his bread. Then he put down knife and fork, and slowly took her chubby brown hand in his own. He handled it so delicately, and spoke so slowly, looking away from her the while, that one might have fancied the effort cost him some uncomfortable qualms.

"Miss Hubbard, I—I hope," he said, "that, whether I am able to serve you in this matter, or not, you will regard me as your friend? Your nearest friend, Lotty?"

"Oh, yes, cousin Frederick! You've been very kind to me—very kind. As soon as you made me call you cousin, I knew we were going to be allies."

"Yes; allies," languidly dropping her fingers and touching the bell. "A fresh omelet, Stephen. Perhaps you had better run up to your books, Lotty. Your Italian master will soon be here."

Lotty nodded and vanished, and he gave a sigh of relief.

His father entered soon after the servant, and dismissing him, drew a chair close beside the table. Fred's insignificant features hardened a little, but he took no further notice of him. One would hardly recognize the stern

father of Lotty's acquaintance, iron in virtue and in will, with only one weakness, that one of tender devotion to this gentle son. They watched each other furtively, like two slow-moving leopards, about to wrangle over the prize of some dead carcass.

"What have you done, Frederick?" the older man said at last.

Fred pushed away his plate, wiped his fair mustache carefully, and rising, stood by the fire. "Very little, I confess. Try a segar, sir?"

"It seems to me you are cursedly deliberate!" rising also, angrily. "There is no time to lose."

"There is plenty of time. There's no need to shake an over-ripe pear. The girl would drop into my arms to-morrow."

"I do not believe it. She has her father's steady eyes. Both shrewdness and sense were behind them, I can tell you, in Dan Hubbard's brain. A weightier brain than yours, Frederick."

"Perhaps so," replied the son, indifferently. "I would not be surprised if the girl added shrewdness to her other disagreeable qualities."

"The girl is well enough," gruffly retorted the father.

"She is utterly distasteful to me," answered Fred, with almost energy. "She is homely, awkward, underbred, and, worst of all, affectionate. I hate a woman ready to lap your hand, like a spaniel, for a kind word."

"If all the women with whom you associate, were as pure and frank as poor Hubbard's daughter, you would be better able to understand her."

Fred Leeds turned sharply on his father, as though he suspected some covert meaning in the angry retort. But the old man walked on up and down the room, without noticing that his son watched him breathlessly, the segar going out in his mouth.

"It is time to be done with this folly, Frederick," Leeds said, stopping at last, and leaning heavily with both hands on the table before him. "It is too late for you to consult your whims and caprices as to your wife. I proposed the bargain to you fairly, five months ago. The money paid to me as guardian would have supported me for years in the way I then lived. With this house and retinue it will barely last a twelvemonth. I agreed to take the house, deceive the girl as to both my position and purposes, and to keep her for you out of the reach of any other suitor. The way is open for you to win and marry her. On the

wedding-day, half of the stock of the lead-mine is handed over to me. It was a fair business contract. I have done my part. Now I look for you to do yours."

"Unfortunately, I am a gentleman," said the son, sulkily, "I have the feelings and tastes of one. I am willing to give them up, but I'll not be bullied into it. I must have time."

"No, you will not have time," coolly said the colonel. "You do not deceive me, Fred. There is some reason for your repugnance, besides a mere captious dislike of the woman. I don't know what it is, and I don't ask. But this I do know, that if you shirk and dally longer in this matter, you may go back to the hells at Baden-Baden, and starve again there. I will marry the girl myself. I give you two months to decide."

Frederick stared in his father's face. But he did not laugh. "You will marry her yourself?" he said, turning suddenly and scanning both faces in the mirror as they stood side-by-side. "You could do it, Col. Leeds," he drawled at last. "Upon my soul, I look as old as you do. I haven't your constitution, you see. I must pull up—pull up."

"It is time," dryly said the father. "When you have made up your mind, let me know;" and he turned to leave the room.

"I need not deliberate about it," said Fred stopping him. "I know what it must come to. I'll take her."

Col. Leeds nodded, and went out.

The son sat down, gloomily, and looked into the fire.

An hour after, he was still sitting there motionless, his unlighted segar between his teeth.

CHAPTER III.

THE afternoon was warm and mellow. The colonel's bays were in such high condition, that they left the teams of the other young fellows in the Park far in the background. Mrs. McIntosh was grim, but silent. Everything combined to put Fred Leeds in good-humor with himself and the world.

Lotty, too, did not cause him any uneasy blushes. She was more presentable than he had hoped. There was none of that effusion or *brusquerie*, which annoyed him ordinarily. Her dress was quiet and well considered. Besides, there was a certain thoughtful self-poise about her, when in public, that surprised, while it puzzled and piqued him.

He brought out his most brilliant small-talk to amuse her. Suddenly, in the middle of a

sentence, he stopped, with a sort of gasp, and unconsciously pulled the horses back on their haunches, forcing them to turn in the narrow path.

"Are we going back? Are you ill?" cried Lotty.

He rallied, and recovered his self-possession at her words.

"I am not well," he said, compressing his bloodless lips.

"Hillo, Leeds!" cried a voice behind them at this moment.

Fred touched the off-horse with his whip, his eyes glittering, with an unspoken oath.

"Some one calls you, Frederick. It is that—that young man on the bridge," said Lotty. "See, he is coming this way."

Frederick drew up with a ghastly smile of welcome.

"Is that really you, Dick?" he said, affecting to be quite glad. "I couldn't believe it at first. I thought you were in Europe. When did you come over?"

While he was speaking, Lotty glanced shyly at the stranger. He was altogether of a different type from Fred. Tall, finely-proportioned, singularly intelligent in face, and with a manner that was as superior to Fred's as possible, because it seemed to her even much higher-bred; he impressed her with a curiously strange feeling, part admiration, part fear. Turning suddenly to look at her, he found Lotty scrutinizing him. Her eyes dropped guiltily, and the blood rose over cheek and brow.

"We came on the Persia," answered the stranger, replying calmly to Fred. "When I saw you first, I wasn't sure it was you, either. But I recognized you by your way of holding the ribbons. I wish," he said, laughingly, with his hand on the rein, "you were a horse for an hour, and I'd show you how you ought to be driven."

"Many thanks," laughed Leeds, feebly. "You always had a fellow feeling for the beasts, you know. I claim no kinship with them. Call round, Wortley. Or—stay—I'll see you at the club, to-night."

But Wortley did not move. He glanced significantly at Lotty.

"Surely you see why I stopped you?" he whispered. "She is my cousin, you remember."

"Oh, true!" hastily. "I'll bring you home from the club to-night," jerking the reins.

But Wortley evidently divined Fred's intention, and was not to be out-generated. He turned to Lotty.

"I will not have you carried off from me in so cavalier a fashion," he said, taking off his cap. "You see," with a laugh, "you are Dan Hubbard's little girl, that I used to tease until she cried; and I am Richard Wortley, your only living relative. Now we are presented in form. My mother told me that you were here this morning. We only came back from Paris last week."

Lotty was cold and shy. She could call little, effeminate Fred Leeds cousin easily enough, and be familiar with him, though he was no blood relation at all. But this six-foot young fellow, with his hearty voice, yet polished, man-of-the-world address, was another matter."

"I am afraid I do not remember you, Mr. Wortley," she said, hesitatingly.

"No, of course not. You were but a toddling mite of a thing. I used to be sent down to the farm to keep me out of mischief. I was a very ruffian of a boy."

"But I have heard my father speak of Mrs. Wortley," said Lotty, thinking she had been rude, and wishing to make amends. "Why did she not come to see me?"

"She could not," his voice altering. "My mother has been an invalid for many years. It will be a great happiness for her to meet any of her own blood. She is a staunch adherent to kith and kin. When may I call on you?"

Lotty glanced anxiously at Mr. Leeds, but the latter kept his head obstinately turned away. "Come to-morrow," she said, at last. "I don't think there can be any difficulty——"

"No. How could there be? Fred here can vouch for me. We are friends—I am his bosom confidant, eh, Leeds?" touching him with a significant laugh.

"Yes, certainly, we are always friends," answered Leeds, with an odd laugh, thus appealed to.

"And we are cousins, Miss Hubbard—and going to be friends in a different fashion from Fred's and mine. I can prophecy; I have the second-sight," with a look which was steady, but not bold, yet which brought the blood into her face.

Leeds raised his reins as if to start, and then halted suddenly. "I must see you, Richard. Wait for me here. I will be back in half an hour," he said.

Dick nodded, and replied, "I understand. You want news from Leipzig. Be happy! I have nothing but what is good to give you."

He bowed again, and they drove on. But Lotty, looking back, saw him standing with

his ap in his hand, watching them, the sun through the leaves overhead making flickering shadows over his black hair and frank, brown face. The young ladies who rode by that way, turned and looked after him; they were all artists enough to appreciate what Lotty called a manly man.

Fred Leeds drove home in silence. It occurred to her, as they reached his father's door, that he was playing his part but badly. "I have not made your holiday very happy for you, Lotty," he said, tenderly. "My thoughts were very busy."

"I knew," she said, good-naturedly. "It was because you saw Mr. Wortley."

"What could Richard Wortley matter to me?" he answered, quickly and angrily.

"I thought he brought you news," archly. "I fancied some pretty fraulein at Leipsio."

"There is no fraulein for whom I care out of my own home," said Leeds, meaningly.

But as soon as Lotty was fairly in the house, he sprang into the phaeton, and drove rapidly back to the Park.

Lotty, as she went up stairs, blushed at his compliment; but soon after she had quite forgot it. Leeds brooded over it to himself, however, as he drove on, as though it conveyed some import below its surface meaning.

"Curse it!" he said, at last. "Let it go! They have the grappling hooks on me on every side. It's not my fault if they drag me into the pit."

He found Wortley waiting for him. The latter sprang up into the phaeton. Fred handed over the reins as a matter of course. The horses went off at once into a swinging trot.

"Look at that!" testily cried Fred. "They would not take that pace for me!"

"They know who holds the lines," said Wortley; "they recognize the brotherhood, eh? If I could induce a woman to care for me as some horses have done, I'd marry to-morrow. How long has Miss Hubbard been with you, Fred? Your father is her guardian, they tell me."

"I don't know how long," drawled young Leeds, listlessly. "She has a snug sum to guard. The old man's investments in Western land turned out well—lead-mine."

Wortley's countenance fell.

"I did not know that," he said, directly. "An heiress, eh? Well, it don't matter to me. How she did hate me when she was a baby! She's got a spice of temper yet, I fancy?"

"We did not come here to discuss Miss Hubbard's temper," said the other, peevishly.

"No, of course not. But it always goes with that colored hair. I wonder if she knows what a prize she has in it. Reddish gold, the true Titian color. And waved like the hair on a Greek statue. What our fellows at Rome would have given to copy it! But I forgot. You want to ask about Luisa?"

"Yes, Luisa," with a groan.

"Well, she is as fleshy and fair as always, a regular Rubens. There's no chance of your becoming a widower. I saw her at the gaming saloon at Baden, in the old, shabby velvet and sham pearls. She was raking in the gold with the greedy twinkle in her pretty face. Those German women never know how to get themselves up." He hesitated a moment, looking down compassionately into Leeds' pale insignificant face, then added, "I know but of one thing about her to tell you."

"She has made our marriage public?"

"No, not so bad as that. No one would believe it in Baden-Baden, if she did."

"No one knew of it but you and Fisher," looking up keenly; "and Fisher is dead."

"Yes, Fisher is dead. It was a bad piece of business, Fred. How did you come into it?"

"Drunk. I'd been playing in their bank all night. Her father was croupier. There was no end to my luck. I won, and drank, and made love to Luisa by turns. The next morning I found myself out at Diehlisdorf: with her, and married."

Wortley whistled.

"Well, Luisa's an honest girl, as far as I know," he said, at last. "Only— However, she's coming over."

"Good God!"

"Yes, it's bad enough. She will wait until spring for you, and if you do not send for her, she will come and find you."

"No one will believe her story here!" cried Fred, vehemently. "I will denounce her as an impostor."

"Not so fast, Fred. You forget me. It's a miserable affair, I know; but, after all, she is your wife: and you must treat her as one."

"You mean to say that you'll expose me?"

"I'll tell the truth, if asked. It would be my duty. Right is right, Fred."

Leeds shot a malignant glance at him, and remained silent, his head sunk low on his breast.

"It's not so bad as it might be," said Wortley, good-naturedly, after a pause. "You can insure her absence by paying for it: and there's no feeling on either side. She don't care a sou for you, Leeds."

"I'm not so sure of that," with a concealed smirk.

Wortley laughed.

"Well, I am," he said. "No, it might be worse. If you were a marrying man, for instance?"

"But I am not," hastily.

"No. How could you be? Shall I turn back to town? The sun is almost down."

CHAPTER IV.

"I TELL you, Lotty, your mother had no such friend as Sophy Wortley. They were the children of the same father," said Mrs. M'Intosh, positively.

"Yes, I understand."

"And it is your duty to go to her, as she is an invalid. I mean to go. She was a bright, pretty girl when I was an old maid, a bit slighted and set aside, and she was very kind to me. That was before I married M'Intosh, and could hold up my head with any of the girls. But I never forgot it to Sophy. I'll go to her to-morrow."

"I wish you would wait, aunt Selina," blushing uneasily. "He, Richard, promised to come to see us; and that is more than a month ago. I've no mind that you or I shall intrude on anybody."

"I don't see how my movements can depend on that young puppy," said aunt Selina, indignantly. But she did not go.

Meanwhile Lotty watched, day by day, each time the door opened, for Richard or some late apology. In the dreary monotony of the daily routine of her life, the chance encounter with him had assumed the proportions of an adventure. Wortley was an artist, too, as she had learned from Fred; and poor. There was a glamour of romance about all artists, seen from Lotty's country-bred vision. He had not, indeed, a pale face, nor fawny, Vandyke beard, nor did he wear a belted velvet blouse. But day by day a square, firm, good-tempered countenance under a round, felt hat, and a tall figure in an English morning-suit of coarse gray, began to take their place in her mind, as the proper face and garb of a great genius.

"An artist must be a man of his times," she used to say to herself, "to master them." She found an occasional mention or two in the daily journals about the pictures brought home by Wortley, who promised to be among the first of our *genre* painters, and she cut them out and kept them in her pocket-book.

It was not until another month had passed,

after the conversation with her aunt, that she summoned courage to speak of him.

"Your friend, Mr. Wortley," she said, one day, to her cousin, "forgot us very speedily, cousin Fred."

They were at the breakfast-table. Col. Leeds shot a keen glance at her over his newspaper; but Fred buttered his toast leisurely before replying.

"Oh, Dick!" he said. "I don't suppose he remembered his promise for a day. The most fickle-minded fellow!"

"Young Wortley has gone South," said the colonel, shortly. "He will not return until spring."

Fred lifted his gray eyes to his father with a flash of surprise. "I believe I did hear something of the sort," he said, languidly.

Lotty did not feel called upon to reply.

"You can have no objection to call on your aunt Sophy now," said Mrs. M'Intosh, when they were back in their own room. "You should not slight your mother's sister because she has an unmannerly son."

"No, I can have no objection now."

Lotty began to sing. Her heart was strangely sore, without cause; and she fancied that every one could see it. So she sang instinctively to divert suspicion from herself.

"We'll go there to-day, instead of to the square," said aunt Selina, in a fever of excitement. "I will get the address from the Directory; and I would say nothing about it to the Leeds."

"No. I'll say nothing about it."

They hurried through the by-streets, and were jolted along in omnibusses, that afternoon, silent and flushed, like two school-girls on a clandestine frolic. "There's no reason why you should not go to your mother's sister," the old lady repeated again and again. "You are not a child, nor a felon, to be locked up. Neither am I."

"No," said Lotty.

But she never owned to aunt Selina how the young blood revolted in her against her enforced solitude. What would she not have given to claim, as a mere acquaintance, any of the thousand bright-faced girls who daily passed her window. But she could not go out and ask them to be her friends; and as for opera, or ball, to which Fred was driven night after night, how she did, day after day, long for them? She was not sure.

Every morning Col. Leeds praised her for the purity of her instincts, which had made his task as guardian so easy. "For my creed is

that of the French school," he was wont to say. "Only under the guardianship of a husband should a young woman face the world."

Thus it happened that this visit to an elderly aunt became an exciting adventure.

They found the house at last.

"I did not think Sophy was so poor as—*this*," said Mrs. McIntosh, and her wrinkled fingers shook as she pulled the bell.

"It is a very nice little row of houses, I am sure," said Lotty, hastily; "and this is an artist's home, as anybody could see," nodding to some puny vines inside of the window.

The door opened as she spoke, and there was the artist himself, looking twice as big and hearty, and handsome, in the choking little door-way, as in the open air of the Park.

He colored a little, but the next moment held out his hands, cordially, to them both.

"You have come to see my mother? She thought you would. She has more faith in her sex than I have," he said, opening an inner door.

It was a large room, occupying the whole lower floor. At the first glance, Lotty thought she had never seen anything so bright, or luxurious. Mrs. McIntosh, however, speedily detected how cheap was the soft gray paper, the mull curtains, which gave the effect of moonlight, the flowers, and the rose-colored chintz. Drawn up before the wood-fire was a large chair, on which reclined a white-haired woman, with a rare, cheerful beauty in her faded face.

"You've come at last!" she cried, putting out her thin hands.

The voice, weak as it was, was curiously like her son's. Lotty stood back, blushing, thinking how musical both voices were, and how unlike to all others. The looks and gestures of these two people, their house, the very air about them, were all like strange, rare music to poor Lotty. She found herself seated beside Richard's mother presently, with the thin hand laid caressingly on her hair.

"You are like your mother, child," said Mrs. Wortley, talking eagerly as one who is forced to be often silent. "Here is her wonderful hair. I've so often told Richard about that hair! I knew you would come to me, although you refused to see poor Dick, day after day."

Lotty looked her surprise.

"She never knew he was there!" broke in Mrs. McIntosh.

Mrs. Wortley glanced up quickly. Then a meaning smile broke over her gentle face. "No matter. It was a mistake," she said. "You are here at last. Dick—where is Dick?"

looking round. "Gone into the studio, I suppose. He thought we could talk better without a lumbering young fellow in the way."

"And right enough! You have no daughters, Sophy?" said Mrs. McIntosh.

"None. Nobody but Richard." Then, in a lower tone, "I do not want any one else."

"He's a good son, no doubt?"

"Yes, he is a good son," quietly. "He has been my sole nurse and companion for seven years."

She shaded her eyes with her hand as she spoke; but Lotty saw the tears in them, nevertheless. They touched her strangely. She was glad Mrs. Wortley was silent and did not praise her son, fluently, to aunt Selina. Lotty thought the tie between them was too sacred to be boasted of to strangers. Yet it would have seemed quite natural to her if the mother had spoken of it to her.

"Are you altogether dependant on your son, Sophy?" asked aunt Selina, who always liked to get to the bottom of a matter.

"Altogether. He does not find me a burden, I think," smiling. "His pictures command high prices now. I was with him abroad. We lived very cheaply, and he thought the water of the Kissinger Spa might help me."

Lotty sat quiet on her low stool, while the two women went back to their girlish days. She was in that mood when a word would have brought a laugh, or tears. She did not know what ailed her. She did not know why this commonplace, little house, one of a long, unmeaning block, should seem like a new world to her; its air purer, and the sunshine, which threw the shadows of the window-vines on the floor, different from any she had ever known. She sat listening to the musical tones of Mrs. Wortley's voice. The invalid's hand yet rested on her head. Lotty was trying to find—what was it she was trying to find in it? Her neck and face were dyed red with shame. What was Richard Wortley to her?

Lotty, who had grown sickly and morbid in mind and body from her unwonted confinement, heard the conversation without distinguishing a word. It was full of happy prophecy to her, to which she could give no meaning, even to herself.

She started and put herself unnecessarily on guard, when the door opened, and Richard came in, pallet in hand. Lotty noticed the quick, loving glance, that passed between him and his mother.

"Have you ever seen a painter's work-shop, Miss Hubbard?" he said. "These two old

friends are full of remembering, I've no doubt, and you are tired of them, and they of you. Will you come?"

When Lotty remembered the painter's workshop, years afterward, she never could convince herself that it was but a little three-cornered room, littered with plaster, busts, canvases daubed with blues and grays, incipient skies and seas, broken easels, and a heap of greasy cloths in one corner. It was a wonderful dream of form and color to her, even to remember, when she was a middle-aged woman. Yet she was weighed down with a sense of her own dullness all the time. It was easy to chatter with Fred Leeds, to humor and flatter him, and to laugh secretly at his conceit. But Dick! To anybody else he would, perhaps, have seemed but a sturdy, generous fellow, full of energy and resolute good sense, with which to push his way through the world. But he towered in Lotty's eyes, crowned with genius, inspired with chivalry. Did not the knights of old succor the weak and helpless? she said, to herself, remembering his care for his mother. There was a strange film over her usually keen eyes. She stammered and blushed with every effort to reply to Dick's good-natured explanations.

When she was gone, Mrs. Wortley summoned him to her room, for their usual gossip before tea. The sunshine had given place to a gray sky, and there was a little flurry of snow outside. The wood-fire burned bright and cheerful. Mrs. Wortley held her boy's big brown hand in her own.

"What did you think of Lotty, your cousin, Richard?" she said.

"She's a dull little body," he answered, indifferently, "and as shy as a deer just caught. It is much easier to entertain young ladies gifted with the customary amount of small-talk. I was rather glad to be rid of her. But she has one exquisite expression; otherwise the face is commonplace."

"I think there is a great deal of beauty latent in her face—beauty that any one she loved could waken."

"Possibly," he said, carelessly. "Shall we have tea, mother?"

"I am sorry you feel no more interest in the poor little thing, Richard," she replied, with a disappointed look. "She has her father's honest features and her mother's tender mouth. They were both very dear to me, and I fancied——"

"You always fancy," said Dick, after waiting in vain for her to finish, "that I want

some other helpmeet than you, you dear, foolish mother; and you are incessantly on the watch to find me one. One sees easily through your cunning. But this little girl wears too much gilt armor for Dick Wortley. I'm no fortune-hunter, thank God! Leeds need not have taken the precaution to warn me off."

"Edward Leeds designs to marry her to his son, I find, from what Selina tells me. They keep the girl in absolute solitude, that the young man may have no chance of rivals. She came even here by stealth."

"Mrs. McIntosh is mistaken. Fred Leeds does not intend to marry her," said Dick, indifferently, pulling off his boots, and thrusting his feet into slippers.

"But she is not mistaken, Richard. The colonel announced his opinion of the suitability of the match to her; and his son is leaving no means unturned to win her."

"With what success?"

"Selina thinks he has made himself very dear to the girl. She is more confidential with him than any one else. She trusts him entirely."

Dick sat staring in the fire, his hands in his pockets, for some time. "It couldn't be mother," he said, at last, quietly. "Fred Leeds is a tricky fellow, but he has not courage to be a villain. I'll have my eye on him, however."

Mrs. Wortley looked up curiously, but Richard offered no explanation.

"I do not understand you, my son," she said, gently, at last. "But if you can be a friend to Lotty, I hope that you will."

"I'll see, at any rate, that the poor little thing comes to no harm among them," he said.

"Ah! here is Jessie with the tea."

But Mrs. Wortley was not hungry. She sat dipping her spoon in her cup of tea, admiring the amber color in the firelight, and glancing furtively at Dick, the while she built wonderful castles in Spain for him.

CHAPTER V.

A FORTNIGHT afterward, Richard met the lean figure and soured face of Mrs. McIntosh coming down the stairs. He went into his mother's room and kissed her brightened face. "Ah! you have been taking another journey into lang syne, mother! I believe you find the fountain of youth there, and manage to get a sip of it every time. No young woman's eyes are as tender or lips so soft as yours."

"You are a silly boy. Selina is coming to

tea to-morrow night, and Lotty—I asked them."

"I'm glad of that, for I have an errand in Hoboken to-morrow night, and otherwise you'd be alone. I wish you would ascertain if there is any real danger of her marriage with Leeds. I have a reason. Find out the truth, even at the risk of seeming intrusive."

"Yes, Richard."

Dick said no more. But he was quiet and thoughtful all day. He was arguing with himself. It was the wisest course for him to take himself off to Hoboken. But was it the manliest? There was no need of his falling in love with any girl against his will; and ought he not to give his personal attention to this matter? Was he not, in some sort, Lotty's rightful guardian? She was a mere child—innocent, shy, an easy prey to Fred Leeds' villainy. Of course, the matter would never end in marriage. But was he right in suffering her heart to be won and corrupted by such a vile wretch? She was never suffered to see any man but this whey-faced scoundrel; if she had any interest or tie outside of the Leeds' house, she would be safe. If she had even a friend, she would not then be so apt to fancy the world contained but the one human being.

Dick paced to and from his canvas all day, dashing on remarkable effects and blotting them out again.

In the evening he went to his mother, looking, we must say, a little embarrassed.

"Have you ordered supper for to-morrow?" he said. "If not, never mind. I'll call in at Delmonico's and attend to it."

"You are going to be at home, then, Richard?"

"Yes. I find that errand to Hoboken can wait."

"I am very glad, my dear," she said, placidly.

But when he was gone, she laughed softly to herself, with a satisfied little nod.

CHAPTER VI.

NEVER was there an evening which had less right to be dull, or a failure. The fresh, bright room was freshened and brightened again. First, Richard brought in more flowers. Then, he changed the pictures. Then, he dispatched a different order to Delmonico's. He had a keen palate, and could have catered for the ghost of Lucullus himself; though he was content, any day, with a baked potato for his own dinner.

Black Jessy waylaid him in the hall.

"I'll make some pounded biscuits for supper. You'll get no pounded biscuits from your French cooks, mas'r Richard," she said, anxiously.

Dick nodded. What did the eternal fitness of things matter? Let old Jessy have her share in the grand *fete-day*, and invite her soul, while she whacked away with her rolling-pin.

Fete-day? He blushed a little at his own fervor and heat, when he was before his easel again. What did the old Scotchwoman and the little country girl matter to him? But he was only anxious to please his mother. Then, satisfied with his motive, he dashed in a new line of breakers, and turned a cart in front into a capsizing ship.

"I've done a good day's work," he said, a few minutes later, looking in at his mother's door. "I've brought out a very fine effect. I'll go clear my brain by a walk."

As for poor Lotty, her head ached, and her heart was sore before the time arrived. One wish, in Rome, to be a Roman. Lotty wished, in the enchanted house of an artist, at least not to be a—horror. One hour she determined to attire herself in some pronounced dress, which would at once startle and win the eye; the next, she would exhibit the severest simplicity. Then she decided she would follow the reigning mode, as though her French maid had clothed her. She was so long in making up her mind that it was late before she presented herself before her aunt's door.

"A very proper dress, my dear. The servants will think that we are going to church," said Mrs. McIntosh.

"I am not going to steal out as a child or a felon," said Lotty. "It is time this farce was ended," and running down the stairs, she tapped at the library door.

Col. Leeds was alone, playing some game with dice against himself, pausing to make abstruse calculations between each throw.

"Ah! where away, little one?" he said, rising politely. "Is not the hour for your constitutional past?"

"Only to my aunt's," said Lotty, as innocently as little Red Riding-Hood, when the poor little child met the wolf. "We are going there for tea. You have no objections, I suppose?"

If any change had passed over the colonel's ordinary expression, it was gone in the instant. "Surely not, dear child," he said. "Mrs. Wortley is a most estimable woman. God bless you! I will send the carriage early,—yes,

early! Oh! by-the-way," as Lotty was almost gone, "has young Wortley returned from New Orleans?"

"Yes, he has returned—from New Orleans."

"Ah? A very clever fellow, I believe. Wants culture, but a rising artist. Good-by—good-by!" kissing his finger-tips, sitting down, and rattling his dice again.

"Now you have run your head into the trap!" cried Mrs. McIntosh, angrily, when Lotty came out of the room.

"There is no trap," replied Lotty, her cheeks glowing. "Col. Leeds has no prejudice against Mrs. Wortley, or her son. On the contrary, he was warm in his praise of them. You are unjust to him, aunt Selina—unjust!"

Aunt Selina dignified no reply. They walked on in silence. But Lotty's heart was swelling with approval of her own virtue and frankness.

They found Mrs. Wortley alone in the softly tinted room, with its clear perfume of geraniums and violets.

It was nearly dusk when Richard lounged in from his walk. During the evening, he was witty, anecdotic, complimentary—everything but his natural, cordial self. Mrs. McIntosh was charmed. But Lotty drew within herself, and answered in monosyllables. He wondered what had transformed the shy, trembling creature, whom he had met a few days before, into this quiet, prim piece of precision, who held eye and lip under as firm control as though she had been brazened by a dozen seasons of society.

"She is sure of her position. She is engaged to Fred Leeds," he thought.

He was half angry. He had come to regard the orphan as under his protection. If she was in danger, he had meant to defend her. Something of the old, zealous chivalry of the knight, to whom she likened him, had actually fired Dick Wortley's big heart. "But if she had accepted Fred Leeds," he said, to himself, when he saw her changed manner, "she must be on a par with him, in both brain and spirit; and why should I trouble myself about her?"

So Dick Wortley, at supper, dissected his crabs in bitterness of soul. Yet, after all, he reflected, he could now do his duty to the girl without peril to himself. There was no danger now, that, in proving himself her friend, he might find himself her lover. It was those shy, innocent girls, who were so dangerous: and then, love as he might, he would never marry money. Never!

But, after supper, a trifling circumstance

occurred, which altered Dick Wortley's whole course through life; for men, with even the unconquerable strength and insight with which the young artist held himself endowed, are no better than the great ships that turn hither and thither against their own will, and against the ever-flowing tides, at the bidding of some paltry bits of steel which they do not see.

He had taken Lotty into the studio again, at his mother's instance, on pretence of examining his last picture. Dick was courteous and formal. Lotty icily civil. Suddenly she thawed.

"Here is the hayfield!" he said, stopping before a ten by twelve picture, thrust into the corner.

She looked at it as he spoke. Suddenly her cheeks burned, her eyes darkened angrily.

"I knew it was not true!" she cried, under her breath.

"What was not true?"

"That the background was flat, the color tame, and the design hackneyed and worn-out. Surely you remember!" She pulled out her little note-book as she spoke, taking one from a dozen slips of newspapers there.

Wortley looked puzzled.

"Oh! the notice in the Post?" he said, at last, reddening. "I saw it."

"I would not mind it!" she continued, excitedly. "All the world knows what you can do! It made me so angry—so angry, that I could not sleep that night!"

"Did it?" Dick's voice had suddenly grown curiously deep and tender.

He looked keenly from her passionate little face to the fluttering slips of paper in her hand; they were all headed, Art Column."

"Will you let me look at the others?" he said.

Lotty recollected herself, with sudden shame and a rush of the prettiest blushes.

"They are nothing. Odd slips, mere scraps," she stammered, pushing them into her book, and shutting it with a click.

"My mother was right," thought Wortley. "There is wonderful latent beauty in her face. But it was only to be called out by one who loved her."

Some of Dick's long dead forefathers were Irish. He kindled easily. His heart grew light and warm on the instant. His blood rushed through his veins like the vapor of some fiery spirit. His eyes rested on her with a new meaning, which she shrunk from with a sweet pang. He came into sudden, swift accord with her, as though some magic had laid bare to him a subtle relationship between them. He under-

stood now that her hard coldness was only another shield, behind which diffident girls hide themselves. So shy and so pure!

"But the woman she can be," he went on thinking, "will never be revealed until some great crisis in life comes to her. The beauty, latent in her heart, is as singular as in her face. I hope she may love worthily. Meantime, I will be her friend." He prided himself, you see, on his cool judgment.

"I have a sketch or two here of Coldsden," he said. "Let us try and fancy we are back in your old home."

As he spoke, he seated her where the moonlight from the window fell aslant on her lovely little face, and placed himself beside her to look at the pictures, close enough for her soft drapery to fall upon his arm, and her sweet-scented breath now and then to touch his cheek.

"Did you warn Miss Hubbard against Fred Leeds, my son?" asked Mrs. Wortley, as soon as her guests were gone.

"Against Leeds?" waking as out of some dream. "Oh, I remember! I did not think of it; the truth is. But it is not needed. That rapid little wretch could never affect a woman of that order. I need not betray his secret. He can do no harm."

CHAPTER VII.

THE damp, warm air of an early spring day fluttered the curtains of Col. Leeds' private room, and displaced the carefully-adjusted light curls of his son, as the latter lounged by the window. There was a faint similitude to a May blossom in the young man's dress, in the delicate gray of coat and trousers, the primrose gloves, the faint odor that hung about him; by design, no doubt. Such fancies belonged to the natty, but languid, little man; the young girls with whom he danced were wont to call him a practical poet.

He held a bunch of lilies in his hand, which he leisurely smelled, now and then.

Col. Leeds, his newspaper on his knees, waited for an answer to a rather long declamation which he had just finished. Fred was tired. He yawned, elevated his whitish eyebrows, and after a pause, replied, "Pon my soul, I don't know what's to be done. You say she sees this Wortley frequently?"

"No. But they do meet. The rarity of the meetings will give him a charm of romance in her eyes. He will not grow common. In three months she will be of age, and free to bestow her hand where she will. I gave you the

chance, and you have thrown it away." He lifted the paper before his face again.

"I hope the matter is not in so desperate a case as you think, sir," answered the son, with indifference, either real or feigned, and he buried his sharp nose among the lilies-of-the-valley. "Now, these flowers have an earthy, underbred smell to me. I have a perfume on my handkerchief far more delicate and agreeable. Nature is a failure, after all. Contrast the two, colonel," coming near him.

He started back as the old man dropped the paper. His father's face was colorless.

"This is enough," cried Col. Leeds, in a voice hardly above a whisper. "I understand you. You give up the affair?"

"By no means."

"We have failed. You alone are to blame."

"I could not force the girl to marry me," said the son, sulkily.

Col. Leeds waved his hand slightly, as if putting any plea that his son might make aside definitely. It was a dangerous symptom to Frederick, that his father, in his white heat of passion, neither swore nor moved, but sat steadily and silent. The spring wind blew in softly, and the curtains waved. The two men looked each other full in the eye for a moment. Then the younger one threw down the flowers, and coming forward a step, leaned both his dainty hands on the table, bringing his face on a level with his father's.

The worst meaning of that face was bared, perhaps, for the first time in his life. Col. Leeds drew back. There was a look of age, a depth of sharpness and cunning in the face, that startled even him.

"Is there no way to get at this woman's money, except by my marriage with her?" said the son.

"No. It is securely settled on herself. In three months she will be of age. But this is not all," raising his hand, when Fred would have spoken. "In three months I will be literally a pauper. You asked less than a year to insure success. I risked all on this chance. Marry her, or go back to the old game, as I shall have to do."

"It is too late for that. My face is known in every gambling-house in Europe. This is a good chance," hesitating.

The ease and wealth in this "good chance" had never risen so real before to Fred. Never had he been tempted as in this moment. But this did not blind him to the other chance. "If I married her even secretly, there would be no guarding myself against Wortley," he thought.

"The fellow could send me to Sing-Sing by a word; and he would lose no time in speaking that word."

The father caught his eye again, as he stood there, hesitating.

"I said to you before, that I knew some secret objection to this marriage existed. I know it now. Your manner betrays you, sir. Wouldn't it be wiser to trust in me? I am an older and more skillful man than you. I may be able to remove it. I ask you because we are in the same danger: we are going down to ruin together."

Fred stood quiet, while his father spoke, looking thoughtfully at him.

"I don't ask you for a son's confidence in a father," continued Col. Leeds. "It is too late for that." There was a curious change in the hard voice as he said this.

"Yes," said Fred, slowly. "I trust you and I, sir, are too wise for any such sentimental folly."

He stopped there. He had half a mind to unbosom himself of the whole matter. The old man, if not so crafty, was more resolute than he, and would have less scruple, perhaps, in disposing of this greasy wretch, Luisa. But after a minute's reflection, he kept his secret. Col. Leeds, he knew, might forgive his son for any vice; but for a folly—never.

"I'd rather go to Sing-Sing than tell him, that I was taken in by a Dutch dancing-girl, even when I was drunk," he thought.

"I cannot confide in you, sir," he said, aloud. "But this I will say, that the difficulty in the way is one which is conclusive, and the sole

knowledge of it rests with Wortley. He has me in a yoke that I cannot break."

"If Wortley was out of the way, then——"

"I believe I could marry Lotty at a month's notice. Perhaps in a week's. Women regard me with more complacency than you do, sir," he said, simpering.

"Perhaps so," said his father, dryly. "You can go now. But stop. Is there no other obstacle in your way than Wortley?"

"Nono."

He thought, as he said this, of a dozen ways in which the now loathsome, fat incubus, from Baden-Baden, could be got rid of forever, if only Wortley could be prevented from exposing him.

"Very well, then. We understand each other. But you should have told me sooner."

"Perhaps I ought. But I did not know, till Wortley came back, you see, sir——"

"Never mind," interrupted his father, angrily, with an impatient waive of his hand.

"You've been making a fool of yourself, somehow, I see; and the thing now is to get you out of the scrape; not to listen to your excuses. I will think the matter over. I'm not a man to be foiled. If Wortley is the only obstacle," and he stopped for a moment, looking his son menningly in the face, "if Wortley is the only obstacle, why then," with an oath, "he must be put out of the way."

"I'm sure I've no objections," answered the son, with a light laugh; and turning, he left the room, saying, as he went, "Yes! Let him be put out of the way."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

HOW BELLE MILLION FOUND HER HUSBAND.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DORA'S COLD," ETC., ETC.

THE heroine of every modern tale, to be interesting, must be an heiress, a beauty, and a belle; and mine is no exception to the rule. But Belle Million was no purse-proud heiress. She was humble and simple in many ways. Among her virtues was that of charity; not merely reckless liberality of hand, but a tendency to homely, old-fashioned deeds of mercy, done in person, with tender pity in voice and eye, that, strange to say, seems to do more good than large sums of money subscribed upon paper, and distributed by rule. It was on one of these errands that she came upon a subject with "a bad kind of fever," which, communicated to her, proved to be small-pox.

For a person laboring under such a malady, there is no sympathy in really "good society." Had the heiress suffered from a cold in the head, her door would have been besieged with calls, inquiries, flattering attentions; but under the fear of this dread scourge, servants fled, friends held aloof, and the brown-stone mansion, marked and guarded by the police, was utterly deserted. Of all the beauty's admirers, the belle's companions, the heiress' followers and flatterers, none remained to aid her in her dire affliction; but the good, faithful, childless aunt, with whom she lived, and a scarred, Irish nurse.

When at last she slowly recovered, after a fierce battle with the disease, in which youth and a good constitution prevailed, it was with no disposition to assert her right to the place she had held before. To her earnest, young mind there was no parallel for the baseness, the meanness, the cowardice of her friends: their desertion hurt her more cruelly than she knew: she spoke of it with cynical coolness, but she felt it in her very heart of hearts.

People, whose daily fight is for life, and the means to support it, cannot appreciate the agony this petted creature endured, when she first looked in her mirror. They would hardly be just to what would seem to them a fanciful and intangible trouble. But to Belle Million, the sight of her scared, discolored face, was bitterer than death. It represented to her the loss of love, friendship, all the sweet dreams of youth her girlish heart had cherished. It seemed the beginning of a new and dreary life,

blighted by insolent pity, and darkened by suspicion; for she still retained her fortune, and hereafter would attribute to its influence, she said to herself, whatever kindly notice or attention she might, in future, receive.

Happily the girl was a Christian, and the good woman who had been more than a mother to her orphaned youth, had taught her where to bring the burden of her sorrow. When she fell, crushed and weeping, in all the weakness of convalescence on that kind breast, at first sight of the altered aspect that she fancied was to be hers for life, the elder knew how to whisper words of comfort, which, after awhile, were repeated not wholly in vain.

But Belle could not keep her sore heart in silence, or hide her changed face forever from the gaze of her old associates. She pleaded with her uncle to travel, and her wish was law to that worthy man and his kind wife. She could not, she averred, bear to go out, even to obtain air and exercise. She had no wish to live. Instead, she rather longed to die. The good couple, terrified, prepared, at once, to go to Europe.

A little sailing vessel, bound for France, received the party, instead of the luxurious Havre steamer, for Belle had a morbid fear of meeting friends or acquaintance on the larger packets. The bustle and confusion of the wharf; the soft, lapping sound of the dark water; the white sea-line far away, just visible to her dim eyes; the fragrance of the salt air, and the foreign odors of the French cuisine close at hand; the odd, stuffy interior, revealed by a brilliant, swinging-lamp below the hatchway; the smell of tropical fruit unloading from a vessel lying near; all these things excited our heroine wonderfully, for she had been in the house for months, seeing and hearing nothing, and her nature was once keenly alive to pleasure. Unconsciously, she was left behind by her uncle and aunt, till, starting from her dreaming station, she found herself alone at the foot of the gangway-plank.

Turning, a little alarmed, to follow them, her foot slipped, and she would have fallen many feet to a grave in the dark water rippling beneath them, when, suddenly, a friendly arm interposed, a friendly voice said cheer-

fully, "This way," and she was assisted up the plank, and placed, in safety, beside her friends.

Belle slept, that night, more soundly than she had done for many weeks, and did not wake till they were tossing on the brisk waves running far out beyond the bay. Her maid, a faithful, elderly servant, the only one her aunt had taken, was just able to dress her, and immediately succumbed to sea-sickness for the rest of the voyage.

Her uncle took her on deck, when her own comfortable breakfast was finished, and then, with a hasty excuse, left her to the care of the captain. She was herself an excellent sailor, and thus, while her aunt and uncle were invalidated by sea-sickness, was much on deck. There she sat, watching the bounding waves, so near to her dimmed sight, alone, as she fancied; but really watched in turn by a self-constituted guardian.

Belle, in her new humility, was unconscious that the sea-wind was freshening her faded cheek to a prettier pink than it had ever worn before. Sitting rapt in sad meditation on her altered fate, trying to keep her thoughts from dwelling on the sore point, toward which they persistently tended, she was sometimes aware of the dark shadow lingering near. But at first she did not identify it with the kind stranger, who had aided her on the night of her embarkation. She had never told her friends of that little adventure. It was the one secret she liked to keep. She had never quite known from what he had rescued her, and feared to think; yet she remembered, with a thrill of pleasure, the helping hand, the soft voice, the gentle touch, the friendly guidance, the sweet protection coming from the strong and powerful to the weak and blind; and she remembered all this the more, because it was the first she had ever received, dedicated wholly to herself, independently of her extrinsic advantages. It was the woman, not the belle, or the heiress, to whom this kindness had been given! Now and again, as the voyage went on, she received help in small, unobtrusive ways, from the same source; and it made her believe there was still some goodness left in the world.

It is quite proper that the reader should know more of this unseen guardian. He was an Englishman, and the only passenger beside Belle's party. But he ate with the captain, for Belle's uncle had stipulated for a table for themselves; and hence Belle, as yet, knew not whether he was one of the officers, or not. Up to twenty-three he had been a mere nothing,

a country gentleman's younger son, attracting and inviting little notice. A series of unexpected deaths had suddenly, however, placed Arthur Winstanley next in succession to a great estate and a title; and immediately, before, indeed, his deep mourning made it really decent, the great, young student became the fashion.

Followed, fêted, flattered, openly angled for by manœuvring mamma's and bold beauties, half in love with life, half disgusted with it, the new recruit of society lingered through a few seasons, and then disappeared as untrammelled as he came. While his little world of London was wondering what had become of him, he had donned a traveler's suit to go all around the world, and resume those dearly-loved scientific studies his sudden burst of prosperity had interrupted. For half a dozen years he had wandered to his heart's content; and now was on his way home, a little cynical still, it must be confessed, as to women; at least, he had been, when he took passage on this vessel; and he had taken passage in it, in preference to a steamer, because he supposed he would be alone. But his cynicism was fast departing now. There was, it is true, nothing beautiful, in the ordinary sense of the word, in this quiet, little American girl; and yet, in some way, she attracted him more than any he had ever known. It was sweet to do her a service; to receive her gentle gratitude; to watch her trusting dependence upon his care. It was pleasant to an artistic eye like his, to see the picture she unconsciously made, sitting in her accustomed place; the soft, graceful outlines of her figure, seen against the clear background of the sky; her gray dress of strong serge, falling in folds a sculptor could not have improved; her idle hands loosely folded in her lap, a fair contrast to the dark, coarse material on which they rested; her delicate face, half-hidden by the close hood, arranged carefully, by loving hands, to shade the blemishes of her illness from sight, and beneath which the waving, silken hair was blowing out in the sea-wind, that touched with red the pale, young cheek. She could think, this girl, he said to himself. She could feel, and yet repress her feelings and her thoughts, so that they should not overflow in weak, washy commonplaces upon the unhappy persons nearest her. He had watched her for days before he heard her speak a word, and yet, in the changes of her eloquent face, he had divined all this. She suited him. He was a reserved man, liking silence always better than speech, and he almost loved her for hers.

The captain, at last, made a change, by introducing them. The captain was the politest of men, but he had an inefficient memory. He had been deputed, by the agonized uncle, when compelled, on that first day, by sea-sickness, to go below to watch over her. But with true French gallantry, how different from the reputed, he had flown to his duties, when they first required him, and given his charge no further thought. It occurred to him, at last, as we have said, that they ought to be made acquainted; and he now performed the office of introduction accordingly.

Belle was startled by finding that the person by her side, on whose unobtrusive services she had learned to depend, was not an officer of the ship, as she had supposed, but a stranger, whose pity had been aroused by her helplessness. She was not only startled, she was painfully shocked. The light left her musing face, and a dark-red shadow of shame swept over it instead. She turned her head, half haughtily, with something of her old pride of beauty and power, toward the man who had thus dared assist her in her low estate. Then, remembering his delicate kindness, and her own loss of the charms that could attract such courtesy, she put out a tremulous little hand, in recognition of all she would not name, and thanked him with something of humility.

After all, Belle was a little unjust. Arthur Winstanley did not even know her name, it had been so caricatured by the French captain's pronunciation. Nor was he sufficiently familiar with American affairs to be aware that the bald-headed, little, old gentleman down below, suffering agonies of sea-sickness, was the sole remaining head of the great house of Million Brothers, as the pale girl in gray was its only heiress. He was still further from recognizing in her the belle, whose fame had reached him when he first landed in America, and whose acquaintance he then persistently avoided.

As it was, he loved her. The sudden change in her countenance, when they were introduced, struck him breathless with the discovery of this new emotion. Love had entered his soul, and filled it, during the hours of silent companionship, and until now he knew it not. When her face, with its transient shade of trouble, was withdrawn, he felt how blank was all the space between sea and sky; when it dawned, next day, above the dirty hatchway, the sun arose for him; and he would not have exchanged the look, half of recognition, half of reserve, from those darkened eyes, or

the conscious flush on that usually pale cheek, for all the opportunities of his past, all the promises of his future.

As for Belle Million, she moved more cautiously. It would not do for a great heiress to fling her heart away on a stranger, a mere adventurer, very probably, who had happened to befriend her. Nor was it likely that the only really handsome man she had ever seen, for so, with her half-blind eyes, she at once decided him to be, should fancy a faded wreck of health and beauty, like herself. Therefore, with firm resolve, she repressed his continued attentions, and thereby put the last link in the chain of his captivation.

He told his love all the sooner, however, for he felt that she was learning daily to do without him; that her health was becoming more firmly established, her eyesight getting clearer. He feared that the charm of her sweet dependence would soon be altogether gone, unless he strove forever to renew it. They were alone on the deck, amid a rising storm, when he spoke. Neither saw the coming tempest, so deeply were they absorbed in other thoughts. Not even the noises of the coming gale aroused them: the creaking timbers of the laboring ship, the fury of wind and wave, the straining of cords, the flapping of canvas, the voices of half a score of men. But each heard the low tones of the other, as a certain question was asked and answered; urged, it seemed, in vain.

"I cannot," said Belle, at the close of the long interview; and Arthur Winstanley left her at last. Yet he suspected that she loved him. He could not understand her persistent refusal, however, for she had been even more positive, after his mention of his rank and expectations. He was angry, hurt, and sore; and in that mood left her.

She fancied him gone forever, and was glad of the momentary strength and obstinacy that had enabled her to persist in rejecting him. But her self-satisfaction did not last long. Her heart began to tremble at the desolate prospect of the future, and she was made aware that she loved him, by the fast growing anguish she experienced. For the first time since he had saved her life, and earned the claim upon it, that she would now deny, she felt utterly alone and helpless. She dared not believe his confessions, yet she could not wholly forget his earnestness. She never dreamed but that he knew of her great wealth. She firmly believed he saw her altered face, but ignored it in order to secure her fortune.

Meantime the storm increased; but to her

unnoticed; for she had hidden her face in her hands. Tears were streaming between her fingers faster than the drops of rain, which were already beginning to descend. The night had fallen black around. Half an hour, perhaps, had passed. Suddenly, the angry hiss and roar of the elements was drowned by a sudden louder sound, the crash of a great wave, that, bursting like a thunderbolt above them, sent the vessel reeling, sideways, with a mighty shock, that flung the kneeling girl, helpless, across the deck. Drenched, gasping, perishing, she would have been swept overboard by the overwhelming flood on which she floated, but for a strong arm, which caught her, and held her fast to the mast, against which both now clung. Well she knew that firm, strong hold. In that hour of death, as Belle thought it, pride, vain-glory, and hypocrisy, were utterly forgotten. Her heart confessed its weakness. With a sob and a broken word, she clung to her deliverer, and begged him to forgive her; and heard through all the uproar of heaving surge, the dear voice replying, "My love! we will die or be saved together!"

Saved they were. The vessel righted directly, the tons of water left the decks, and it was possible, once more, to walk. Half-drowned, but otherwise seemingly not greatly discommoded, Belle made her way, or rather was helped, to the gangway. Her deep-sea bath (it must have

been that, of course) had washed the clearest, deepest tint of rose into her pale face, and had swept (or was it love?) the mists from her eyes, so that she sprang another Venus, as it were, from the waves.

Time passed before her friends were competent to see this change, or comprehend the facts that led to them. Weeks of rest were required, of absolute bodily ease, and high feeding, before these victims of her whim were so far recovered as to understand their niece's circumstances, and make the explanations necessary, on her behalf. And in those weeks, the cure begun on ship-board was completed. The drooping invalid had become a lovely, rosy girl, who did her lover's taste credit in all the scenes amid which he led her.

Belle is now a countess. But society has not yet quite found out the truth about her marriage. Gossip, on this side of the Atlantic, reports that she wedded a foreigner, that she lost her looks, that she is not coming back to her native country again. I cannot think how her English home can spare her; and yet some ship must bring her over the sea, to gladden the hearts of two dear relatives here, who cannot die in peace till they have seen her; and then you will realize how the heiress, the belle without her following, the beauty behind a cloud, or rather the sweet woman, independently of all her extrinsic advantages, won the love that has glorified her life ever since.

MY ELDERLY LOVER.

BY FRANK LEE BENEDICT.

We went to look at the house. The house suited us, and there not being any tiresome masculine will to keep us in a state of doubt, by suggestions of leaky roofs, or smoky chimneys, or any other pretext for shilly-shallying, we took the house that very morning for five months, and before nightfall were established therein with our belongings, namely, three trunks, a box of books, an ancient brown thrush, and old Hannah, who had formerly been my nurse, and was now our housekeeper and autocrat generally.

It was a little village nestled in the shadow of the Catskills. When the sun went down, we were sitting in our parlor, over a quiet cup of tea; and Tim, the bird, singing in the window as loudly as if he wished to prove to the hosts of robins in the garden, how little their melodies were worth compared to those of a thrush, that had been properly educated among hand-organs and humans.

Aunt Marjorie was the dearest old-maid relative that ever anybody owned. Naturally, to the wisdom of not quite eighteen years, like mine, she seemed very ancient; but I have since decided that thirty-eight was not exactly the age of Methuselah, though it appeared so then. She was a pretty woman, too, only rather pale; and her brown eyes had an absent, cold look, as eyes do that have never been lighted up by the dreams which youth ought to know. Aunt Marjorie considered herself an elderly woman, and was willing so to do, though she looked a great deal younger, in her sober-colored gowns, than many an old frump, going about with bare elbows, like a new sort of writing implement, and displaying as many bones in their necks as a whole family of skeletons ought to possess.

There was an odd thing about aunt Marjorie—she had never been in love. I might not have believed another woman, who told me such a thing of herself: but aunt Marjorie's word was to be taken without salt. I used to pity her exceedingly for having missed that experience. I had been in love half a dozen times, at least, and liked it very much; and I always felt that she had been outrageously cheated by the old jade, Destiny. But Marjorie never pitied herself, and seemed very well satisfied to take life

as it came. To be sure, she had never had much time, until lately, to wonder and lament, for from the day she was sixteen she had always been living for somebody else, as hard as she could live. She had had an invalid mother, and a brother with a broken back, and as soon as they died, more distressed relatives came along, and after the others were comfortably under the sod, she had me to take care of, my parents having got rid of the responsibility by dying, too. A weary handful Hannah says I was—as far back as my memory serves, I am obliged to confess that she tells the truth.

So now I was grown up. I was past seventeen, and we still lived together; but aunt Marjorie had been cheated out of her season for love-dreams and nonsense. Each time I was newly in love—how often that had been within the last two years I will not try to count. I pitied her more and more, and was excessively patronizing, and told long stories for her edification; and she was always the most charming confidant in the world.

But I don't seem to get to the point. I wanted to tell you of myself, and I am all the while gossiping about the love passages that my aunt did not have. I'll try it again.

My name is Emily Vane, but there is nothing of the weather-cock about me. I change my mind frequently, but I always have a good reason for it. Aunt Marjorie's name was Vane, too, as was right and proper, since she was my father's sister. I used to wonder what she thought about, as she never had any love affairs; and how could novels and poetry interest her, since she could not comprehend their mysteries? And now she never would; Fate had cheated her; she was thirty-eight years old. Oh! a dreadful age! There was nothing for her to do but stand aside and see me live my romance out. I was very magnanimous; I told her all about my loves, and my plans, and the novel life I meant to experience—and she was always interested. Sometimes, in thinking over our conversations, I would be astonished to discover that she had guided me by her judgment, for all she knew nothing about such things, and I was so wonderfully wise.

But here I go again, wandering like a weak-minded wind; and all I meant to tell about was

my life that summer, beginning with the day we settled down at Clover Cottage, as contentedly as if we had been the little pigs in the old story. I am sorry, for the sake of my comparison, that pigs were the animals spoken of; but let that go!

After tea, aunt Marjorie went up to her room to put her things in order, but I felt too indolent for any such exertion, so I slipped out into the garden, and wandered through the orchard at the back of the house, and was delighted with everything I saw. Finally, I sat down under the apple-trees, and looked at the beautiful landscape spread out below: the narrow valley shut in by the towering hills; a lovely river in the distance; and a soft purple haze gathering about that made it like an enchanted scene.

I was imagining a wonderful picture, which I meant to paint some day, and a beautiful poem that I intended to write, and a symphony that I would compose, and all sorts of exalted fancies, when there was a noise as if the world had come to an end, and the orchard wall fallen in the crash; and, worse than all, the bark of a great dog, which was not to be borne with equanimity, if instant death in the general dissolution of the universe was.

Clatter—bang; dog barking again. I was just ready to run, when I heard a man's voice exclaim,

"The deuce!"

Then I stood still; I was so angry at the idea of having my privacy thus invaded, that I forgot my fears. I just took time to remember that it was like a bit out of a sensation novel; then I called boldly,

"Who's there?" and stood ready to run if the dog barked again.

"Be quiet, Nero," I heard the male voice command—and it was a very deep, musical voice; so I thought I would make another point in the novel by stepping out from my covert and confronting the youth. I remember distinctly deciding that he had blue eyes and golden hair—for my last hero was swarthy as a corsair, and the female mind requires variety.

More muttered words; strangled growls from the dog; then, in a tragic voice, I cried,

"Who comes? Speak, I say."

I thought that sounded more like a melodrama than it did like Cometh up as a Flower, or one of Annie Thomas' novels, and I was annoyed at myself. I tried to think of something witty and annihilating to say, but I couldn't; so out I stepped, and tripped over a blackberry-vine, and nearly fell on my nose; and

the big bark boomed out again; and instead of saying anything, I squealed like a guinea pig—and the nasty vine tore a hole in one of my stockings.

When I recovered my equilibrium, I found myself face to face with a great Newfoundland dog, with his mouth open in stupid wonder, and a tall man, who had his mouth open in astonishment. But away went my romance. The hero was, at least, forty, his face did not look old, but his hair was a little gray, though it did curl.

"I beg ten thousand pardons," said he. "I had no idea there was anybody here! I live in the next house, and am in the habit of going through the orchard on my way down the hill."

The blackberry-vine was scratching my leg; I was conscious that my dress was showing my torn hose; so all I could do was to grin idiotically, and say,

"Yes."

"I fell in getting over the wall," pursued the stranger, "and Nero fell over me. I hope I didn't frighten you."

I only grinned idiotically once more, and this time I said,

"No."

Then the nasty, old, gray-haired wretch bowed, and whistled to his dog, and said,

"If you will permit, I will trespass this time, but I promise to prove a more civil neighbor in future."

Through the orchard he went, leaped over the wall, and disappeared down the hill. I looked at my stockings. As I expected, they were dreadfully torn. I bounced into the house, and was cross as a bear all the evening, and alarmed aunt Marjorie by informing her that we had a horrid old white-haired man for a neighbor, who was either a madman, or a burglar, and I rather thought both. But Hannah happened to hear me, and with her usual impertinence spoke up,

"No, indeed, Miss Emily; the new girl was telling me about him. He's a Mr. Cromlin, and comes here every summer; she says he's a proper nice man."

I looked in a very dignified way at Hannah, but Hannah was not in the least subdued.

"You've torn your dress," said she; "what a careless child you be! I declare, Miss Emily, you ought to leave off jumping about so—you're a'most grown up now."

I should have been glad to wave Hannah out of the room with a gesture of command; but as I knew it would only result in her telling me "not to be silly," I walked away with

great dignity, and heard her confide to aunt Marjorie,

"Em'ly 'll always be a baby—it's the way with short girls."

Now my height was a tender point with me, and I was more angry than ever, and consoled myself by getting up a respectable hatred for the man, who had been the means of bringing such varied and unendurable humiliations upon me.

Would anybody believe a creature could have such ill-luck, and be so tormented! The very next day, old Judge Boker, who was staying in the village, came out to call on us, and brought that detestable Cromlin man in with him; and when I went down into the parlor, there he was; and when aunt Marjorie introduced us, he said, unconcernedly,

"I hope you have forgiven the fright I gave you last night."

I looked daggers at him, and answered with a drawl,

"I don't remember! 'Oh, yes! now I do. You were with the big dog.'"

Then I didn't talk to him any more, only to speak when he addressed me; and, in spite of my dignity, he would do that as often as he pleased. The old judge seemed mightily amused at my answers; but aunt Marjorie once or twice looked a little grave, though, of course, I did not mean to be taught how to treat a man by an old maid who never had a love affair, when I had been engaged three times. It wasn't reasonable, and for awhile I was inclined to think that aunty was getting like the old cats in books, who hate their young lady relatives; but I got over that, and was somewhat ashamed of having indulged the fancy.

That was the first visit Mr. Cromlin paid us, but it was by no means the last. Indeed, I may say that he rushed along toward an intimate acquaintance as rapidly as he could, by all the devices that would suggest themselves to the natural clumsiness of the masculine mind. It took me some time to get over the dislike, which the manner of our first meeting had naturally given me; but I did gradually, and he seemed quite grateful, as was right and proper. If there had been anybody goose enough to chant his praises incessantly, I dare say I should have hated him to the end of the chapter; but that was not aunt Marjorie's way, and old Hannah, having a deep-rooted aversion to everything masculine, never exhausted greater commendation upon him, than to say "that he was well enough for a man," and

that only when he presented her with early vegetables from his hot-bed, or made himself agreeable in some equally tangible fashion.

I told aunt Marjorie, at first, that I could not abide him; but she did not attempt to argue me out of my dislike.

"He seems inclined to be very polite and friendly," she said, "so I don't think you ought to allow him to see that you are prejudiced against him. We need not accept his invitations to drive and walk, unless you choose."

Of course, as she did not force him on me, I could see that it was my duty not to be rude, and gradually we grew very good friends. He really was not old-looking, after all, I discovered, though his hair did show a little gray, but he was so tall and handsome that I got over thinking of him as elderly.

Matters went on beautifully for as much as six weeks, which is a long time for a woman to agree with any man. But after that I began to have my own little scruples and troubles, though for awhile I kept them even from aunt Marjorie. Of course, you know what was the matter. At least, you do if you are a young woman, and can sympathize with me. That stupid man was doing what all his stupid sex will—getting in love. Oh, dear me! after the first light broke on me, and I could think the matter over, it was useless to employ the participle, as if it were a business just begun and not near a consummation, the silly creature had fallen over head and ears into the most tremendous sort of insanity. It was so foolish of him. At first I was so much vexed with his folly, that I could not even be sorry; but after a little, I reasoned myself into a better state of mind, and could, at least, feel pity. Of course, there was no possibility of my going beyond that: the idea was too absurd. Why, if he stopped to think, or had any faculty of the sort left, he must perceive it himself.

I meditated a great deal about the matter, and tried very hard to find out what it was best for me to do. It seemed only cruelty to show him, by a sudden and decided change of manner, that I had discovered his secret. If he had been twenty-five, I should not have hesitated to do that; but I had read in so many novels, what a serious thing love is to a man who is getting toward middle-age, that I was frightened at the idea of doing anything which might make him desperate. But it was very foolish of him; I could not help saying that, though I was so sorry. I declare, I could not sleep a wink that night for thinking about it,

so I sat up and read the last volume of a new novel; and how I did cry over it, for in a sort of way it was a parallel case to mine, only the heroine married the man out of pity! I did wonder a little whether I ought to do that; but as I was always able to look at every side of a subject, I could see that such weakness would be fatal to him and me. My wretchedness would only make him more miserable; so, when I decided that he must be refused, I really felt I was doing a heroic thing in not snatching at martyrdom, as so many girls would have done, who had not my ability to take in every bearing of a subject presented for serious consideration.

Luckily, the next day, Mr. Cromlin was absent, so I had time fully to study my line of conduct, and be able to preserve my usual manner toward him. I decided that would be best. All I could do was to prevent his speaking out as long as I could possibly prevent it. Of course, the denouement must come at last; but if I could defer it till near the time of our departure, it would make matters much pleasanter for all parties.

Well, he returned, and he was in such an ecstatic state when he came to the house, that I was really afraid aunt Marjorie would discover his secret. I did wish that it was possible for me to whisper a warning word to him, for his own sake. He was very kind and delightfully attentive; in spite of my troubled mind, I could not help enjoying the amusements he was always providing for us. Nothing looked better than his courtesy to aunt Marjorie; I could see that it was altogether on my account; but it was very nice of him. Actually, if she had been a young lady, he could not have appeared more pleased with her society. Sometimes, when he came, I used to make excuses for not going down. I thought it better to accustom him to getting on without my society, and it was wonderful how well he hid the restlessness I knew he felt. I could hear him laughing and talking, till it made my heart ache to think what a hollow mockery it was, and how like a novel, only much more thrilling and dramatic. At last I used to dread being left alone with him, for I knew that he would not be able to control himself much longer; that the secret which was on his lips would burst out in spite of his control, and I should have to make him unutterably wretched; and I never was one of your hard-hearted girls that delight in giving pain.

One evening, we had been out to walk, and met several young people from the village; and

that foolish fellow turned rusty because I talked with Dr. Glesson, and made a pretence of devoting himself to aunt Marjorie; but, dear me, it was such a wretched pretence. I could see that he was just as miserable and jealous as he could be.

The people came in and staid awhile, but aunty had a headache, and went away to her room, and I sat in mortal dread that Mr. Cromlin would not go with the others. I felt a sort of presentiment that he would stay and do something foolish, and I was as correct as if I had been clairvoyant, and could read his mind like a book.

The others went and he staid. I felt myself begin to tremble from head to foot, but I remembered that if he did speak, it was my duty to end the matter then and there; and I must be firm, however much his suffering pained me. I chatted and laughed, like a crazy thing, I was so nervous, but he sat grave and solemn as a statue, and that made me worse still. But it was more unendurable when he began to talk, for it was plain what an effort he made to speak of ordinary things; so I flew off to the piano and began—played all sorts of bits from *Barbe Bleue*—anything to keep him quiet. At last I looked up and there he stood by me, looking as pale as a ghost, with such anxious eyes.

"Miss Emily," he said, and his voice trembled a little, "I wish you would listen to me for a moment."

It was coming. Oh, dear, if he only wouldn't! I tried to laugh, and ran my fingers down the keys.

"What a solemn tone," said I, though it was very hard work to speak playfully; and I felt like an actress doing comedy, when she has a dreadful tragedy hidden in her real life. "Couldn't possibly listen, when you talk like that, and look like your own tomb-stone."

"Be good-natured, and don't mind my looks," said he; "I am too much in earnest to attempt further concealment."

"But I do mind," I answered, trying to gain a little more time. "I can't bear solemnity—it worries my nerves."

"But this need not worry you," said he.

For half a second, I was vexed. Had he so much masculine conceit, that, in spite of my caution, he really supposed he had only to speak to make me willing to listen? Then I thought that could not be, and I did not snub him, but I could not hear him talk then; I had got too nervous, and I wanted to be perfectly composed, so that even while I told him how hopeless his dream was, I might assure him of

my friendship and sympathy, and calm his distress by my wisdom and sensible advice.

I rose from the piano and said,

"Bless me, it is dreadfully late! You must not stay another minute."

"Just listen——"

"No, no," I interrupted, putting my finger in my ears; "not a word—the clock has struck eleven, and I am always deaf as a post after that."

He looked vexed, so I was less sorry for him.

"I did not think you would treat me like this, when you see how much in earnest I am," he said.

"Now don't be cross," I ordered, "else I'll treat you worse. I'll show you how wicked I can be. I'll listen, then, I promise; and I'm sure it is very good of me——"

"Yes, and I thank you," he put in, before I could finish.

"But not to-night," said I; "if it was only to punish you for interrupting me."

"But——"

"Now be good, and don't tease me," I urged. "I will listen—indeed, I will, though I wish you wouldn't tell me anything solemn. Oh! it would be so much better if you would not—so much better."

"What do you mean?" he asked, sternly.

"I didn't mean to say that, at all events," said I, getting a little confused. "Now please to go at once; Hannah will want to shut up the house."

"But Hannah says you will always do as you please," returned he, smiling.

"But I mean to be good; I've turned over a new leaf, and Hannah is cross for a week if I keep her up; besides, aunt Marjorie has a headache, and I ought to go to her; please let me go."

"You are very thoughtful and kind," said he. "I ought not to have detained you; she may want something—I was wrong to stay."

Now that was very nice of him, and spoke volumes for his amiable disposition!

"Good-night," said I, kindly. "Remember, we are always friends."

"Friends? Yes, I hope so—I have need to hope so."

His voice shook again, and he held my hand so tight that I was sorry I had given it to him; but he restrained himself, and added gently,

"Say good-night for me to Miss Vano. I wish her pleasant dreams."

He went away without a word, and I flew up stairs, so nervous and excited that I did not quite know what I was about. Aunt was in

bed. I could see her face looking pale in the moonlight, but she said her head was better.

"Mr. Cromlin has just gone?" said she.

"Yes," said I, and gave her his message; then, all of a sudden, I broke down, and began to laugh and cry at once.

Aunt was so frightened by my absurdity, that she turned as white as a ghost, and begged me to tell her what was the matter. So out it came, though I had meant to keep his secret. I told her what I was afraid of, and how hard I had tried to keep the man from rushing on to a disappointment; and she listened in the most attentive way, in spite of her headache, which I knew was dreadful, by the look in her eyes. She said very little, but advised me to go to bed and sleep, and forget all about it.

"But I am very unhappy," said I. "You are, aunt—~~you~~ you are growing elderly, and have your feelings under proper control; but I am so impulsive, and it makes me wretched to think of bringing misery on anybody."

"Yes," she answered, shading her eyes with her hands, "I am growing elderly—you are right."

She added some words that I did not catch; but when I asked her what she had said, she only replied,

"My head aches so that I can't remember. Go to bed, dear girl. God bless you!"

I was quite touched by her kindness, for her voice sounded full of tears; and I knew that she pitied me for being placed in such a distressing position. I offered to sit by her and bathe her head, but she would not permit it, and hurried me away, she was so anxious that I should not be any more troubled, dear, old thing!

I went to bed, but I did not expect to sleep a wink, and I am sure I don't know how it happened that I did; but I was lost the moment my head touched the pillow, and I never woke till Hannah thumped, like the Day of Judgment, at my door next morning.

Aunt was not down to breakfast. Her head was so bad that she had told Hannah not to let me come in, because she was in hopes to sleep: after that she should be quite herself again. I had a dreadfully lonesome day, and was in mortal fear, each moment, that Cromlin would appear; but he did not; and in the afternoon Hannah told me that she had seen him drive toward the village.

Aunt Marjorie came down to tea, but went back to her room again; so I started out for a walk, in hopes to avoid Mr. Cromlin. I went through the orchard, and met him face to face.

He looked so troubled and dazed, that I could not have cried, and I began to think that this state of things could not go on. I must have peace. If he would be silly he must, and I would end the matter.

"I was just coming to your house," said he. "I have been busy all day, in the village, about some tiresome land I own."

"Don't speak disrespectfully of your possessions," said I. "Property is a good thing."

"Yes," returned he; "and just now I am more thankful for having it than ever."

I knew what he meant. I could not be silent, for fear he should misinterpret it, so I said, in a rather frozen way,

"Indeed!"

"Yes," he went on, quickly. "I think you know why. You must have seen the truth, for I am a very poor dissembler—you *have* seen?"

"There are truths one does not wish to see," said I, speaking as sternly as I could, for I wanted him, from the outset, to understand what his fate must be.

"I don't know what you mean," said he; "and I can't stop now to ask."

"Miss Emily," he said, directly, "I must speak! I am a coward, an elderly fool; but I could not go to Marjorie first. She has avoided me lately, treated me with so much reserve that I got afraid! Oh! be frank with me—tell me if you believe there is any hope? I have been sure, for some time past, that you had discovered my secret, and I believed you would be my friend. Shall I speak? Is there any hope? If I were younger, I might bear the disappointment better; but falling in love is a serious business, when a man gets to be forty."

I did not know what to say—I was so sorry for him. He did not give me much time. Presently he cried out in a violent way,

"Tell me the truth. Your silence is like a confirmation of my fears. Do you believe there is any chance for me—that Marjorie could be brought to care for me? Oh, Emily, oh! I

would be so good to her—I would try to make her happy."

The trees went round, the sky came down. I felt as if I had fallen out of a balloon. What an idiot I had been! He was talking still—my thoughts came like lightning. I understood everything, even to aunt Marjorie's odd manner the night before. I could have beaten my brains out for a fool's, but furious as I was with myself I could be glad.

"Come into the house," said I, and pulled him along without another word.

Up stairs I dashed into aunty's room. There she sat, looking pale and troubled, but so pretty. It dawned upon me at last that she was not a female Methuselah.

"Come down," said I.

"What for?" she asked, dreadingly.

I began to laugh and to cry. I had been an awful fool, but I meant to keep it to myself, and I made up my mind to lie a little.

"There's a man there wants to ask you a question," I said. "Oh, you dear goose! didn't you know I was trying to pump you last night? That long, handsome Cromlin wants to make love to you, and I have promised that he shall have the chance."

I fairly dragged her down stairs into the parlor. Then I retreated, and only heard Mr. Cromlin exclaim,

"Marjorie!"

But the voice was enough.

That's all! But my experience taught me a lesson, which I think more American girls need to learn. The charms of seventeen, marvelous as they are, do not always blind men so utterly, that older women need consider their lives quite come to an end. Perhaps it would be well for the dear creatures of seventeen to remember this.

As for my little falsehood, I am glad to own that I confessed the truth to aunt at last. But she said my mistake was very natural, the dear, darling, old soul!

AUNT INGHAM'S INVITATION.

BY MARGARET MEERT.

JESSIE INGHAM came in from the post-office, flushed with excitement, but prettier than ever.

"Oh, mamma!" she cried, holding up a letter, "here's the invitation from aunt Ingham."

Aunt Ingham was rich, and lived in New York. A few months before, she had stayed a day or two with her sister, and had then promised to ask Jessie to spend part of the winter with her.

"Yes! it is the invitation," said Mrs. Ingham, after having read the letter.

"Oh! I am so glad," cried Jessie. But immediately, with some dismay, she added, "Dear me! what shall I wear?"

"We must manage somehow," replied the mother, thinking, with a sigh, of their straitened income. "As a preliminary step, suppose you bring down your black silk."

Many and glowing were the visions that glided through Jessie's brain during the next week of preparation. Mrs. Ingham had a talent for fitting, and Jessie was clever at trimming and arranging. Sad to say, there was little enough to arrange and trim. The black silk was sponged, and went through such extraordinary transformations, that it would not have been astonished to find itself Nile-green or sky-blue at the closing ceremonies.

Mrs. Ingham brought to light an ample black velvet mantle of irreproachable pile; this she cut into a tight-fitting casaque, which was just the thing for Jessie's tall and elegant figure.

"If my child is poor, among the stylish and fashionable girls she will meet at her aunt's," she said, "she has the figure of the Churchills, that many of them would barter their diamonds to obtain."

A brown cloth dress of Mrs. Ingham's, unworn for years, and, therefore, abundant in material, was ruthlessly sacrificed at Jessie's shrine, in spite of her conscientious remonstrances, and made into a neat suit for traveling and every-day wear. A long, curling, black ostrich plume was also produced from the same mysterious receptacle, and twined around a little black velvet hat, giving it an air at once romantic and fashionable.

The packing-day was an occasion of anxious and momentous interest. Jessie looked on breathlessly while the velvet casaque was settled into its place.

"Don't you think, mamma, that I had better call Sarah to stand on the lid, for fear it will not shut down?" suggested Jessie, as the last tray was put into the trunk.

Mrs. Ingham could scarcely keep her countenance; there was no lack of unoccupied corners in that trunk.

"No, dear. I think it will fasten quite easily."

"What's all this? So you are really going down to the city, Jessie?" said a white-haired old lady, who had entered the room unperceived.

"Oh, Mrs. Thurston! I did not hear you come in. Yes, ma'am, I am going on Monday."

"If she had seen as much of it as you and I, Mrs. Ingham, she would not be so jubilant. I wonder you are not afraid to trust her with those gay cousins of hers!"

"Jessie is a discreet young person. I do not think a glimpse of the world will do her any harm," said her mother.

"Perhaps not. At all events, I have brought you an old woman's contribution, Jessie, to help a possible toilet in the gay world." As she spoke, she unrolled several yards of exquisite old lace.

"Oh, how beautiful! But don't give it to me, Mrs. Thurston, keep it yourself."

"My child, I have kept it for forty years. I think it should once more emerge to do duty on a white, young neck, and over fair, young arms; put it in the bottom of your trunk—you will find some use for it."

Monday morning came; the early train descended to stop at R— station, and Jessie was duly on board in time, with the peaceful consciousness that her trunk was also safely deposited in the baggage-car behind her.

Mrs. Ingham had told Jessie to sit perfectly still until her uncle should come into the car to find her. So, when they reached New York, she remained in her seat, her bright brown eyes scanning closely every face that entered.

"Ah! there he is—that's uncle Ingham."

"Here you are, Jessie, safe and sound!"

"Quite so, sir."

"Give me your checks, we will have to take a car. Your aunt and the girls were out in the carriage."

Jessie assented to every proposal. They were soon at her uncle's house.

The hall-door opened. What light, and warmth, and sound, streamed out into the foggy street!

A fresh, silvery voice was singing, "Ye Merry Birds," in the parlor. Her aunt greeted Jessie very cordially; and Emeline, a blonde, with very fair, wavy hair, was sufficiently warm. Pauline was at the piano, she rose and fluttered forward gracefully.

"Why, Jessie, I am very glad. How is aunt Frances? Come up stairs and remove your hat and wraps before dinner."

"You have just enough time; the room behind mine, Pauline," said her aunt, with that suavity and grace of manner for which she was remarkable.

Pauline was very polite in offering brushes, combs, et cetera; but said nothing of a fresh collar and cuffs; but Jessie had prudently provided those articles in her traveling-bag.

"Oh! never mind stopping to do over your hair, it does very nicely as it is," said her cousin.

Jessie wished Pauline would leave her alone to arrange things to suit herself. She could do nothing satisfactorily with that amiable face looking on, and that impeccable toilet beside her. Her dress suddenly seemed to turn old-fashioned and poor.

She got through the evening very well—her aunt and cousins were very kind and attentive; but she felt a certain shyness among such well-dressed and elegant dames. She was glad to plead fatigue, and retire at an early hour.

I cannot say that any of Jessie's glowing anticipations were distinctly realized. Her cousins and aunt were civil and kind enough, but evidently she was considered a personage of the smallest importance. When callers came Jessie was always introduced; but beyond a few polite inquiries as to "how she liked New York," etc., they had no conversation for her. Jessie was twice as clever and original as the majority of the men and women who came to Mrs. Ingham's house; but if, when sometimes encouraged by the attention of some young gentleman, who recognized a handsome face and elegant figure when he saw one, she ventured to laugh and talk with her natural vivacity and freedom, her cousins would look at her with a sort of displeased astonishment, which could not fail to constrain and silence a timid young girl, who had not learned to trust to her own instinctive notions of propriety.

Jessie went alone to the pictures at Shaws' and Goupil's. She had overheard her aunt one

day sharply reproving Emeline and Pauline because they did not convey her around to all the places to be seen. Pauline had replied angrily, that it was not her place to march around with all the country girls that her mother choose to bring up to see the sights. Emeline laughed at Pauline, and said that her sister thought such a handsome brunette as Jessie altogether an inappropriate walking companion, and declared that she would see to her herself. She was as good as her word, as far as a walk down Broadway went; but she encountered a young woman who was on a shopping tour, and shopping being Emeline's delight, the sight-seeing was instantly relinquished, and poor Jessie was obliged to agree that to be dragged around through different shops all the morning was perfectly to her taste.

Jessie, however, was blessed with a perfect capacity to find her way; she made good use of her eyes, and in a short time was able to roam about at will. She never tired of examining beautiful carvings, or watching the cuckoo clocks when they struck the hour. All these things, and the sounds and sights of the city were entirely novel to her. The rush of life on the crowded thoroughfares did not bewilder her; on the contrary, it seemed to her the very companionship and amusement she had been wanting all her life.

She was walking through one of the cross streets one day, when a tiny little terrier dog, a perfect gem of diminutiveness, bounded past her side, but catching Jessie's admiring gaze, wheeled around and seemed disposed to make her acquaintance.

"Why, what a little fellow you are to be out all by yourself," she said. "Don't you think you had better come home with me?"

The little dog seemed to relish this style of address very much, and jumped and capered around Jessie as though she were an old established acquaintance. The street was quite solitary; so, as she pursued her way, she talked to her new little friend to her heart's content, he responding after his own fashion.

"I should like to know who you belong to, my little one," said Jessie, as she reached the corner.

She was not left long in doubt, for, as she turned to cross the street, a voice behind her called,

"Foss! Foss!"

Jessie involuntarily turned her head, and saw an amused face belonging to a tall, decidedly stylish and well-dressed gentleman.

Foss treacherously forsook his new friend at the sound of his master's voice; and the two disappeared down the avenue.

"There now," thought Jessie, coloring very much, "that comes of my country manners, I suppose. Nobody but a green horn like me would have talked to a dog in the street. I daresay he was laughing at me all the way. Pauline and Emmy would ridicule me to death if they knew it. Well, they won't know it from me."

When she reached home, she found the two girls in excited and earnest consultation over what costumes should be selected for some occasion of moment, it appeared.

"Where are you going, Emeline?" said Jessie, as she paused before the fire to warm her cold fingers.

"To Mrs. Chetard's; a grand party on the nineteenth, given to Irene on her coming out." "The nineteenth! Why, that is more than a week off."

"I know that; but I haven't the smallest idea what to wear."

"Wear your green silk, that is more becoming to you than anything you have."

"Oh! I couldn't think of wearing that; I had it on at the Daters' the other evening, and lots of times before."

"But you could make it over, with a muslin over-dress, couldn't you?"

"Make it over!" ejaculated Emeline, in scornful accents. "Make over a dress for such an affair as Mrs. Chetard's will be—that shows you know nothing about it."

Feeling that she did know nothing about it, and cared still less, Jessie departed to her own room to take off her hat and cloak, and continue the perusal of an absorbing novel she had found there.

At the dinner-table her aunt looked up when the subject of the party was broached.

"Did you give Jessie her card of invitation, Pauline?"

"No, ma'am, I forgot it," replied Pauline, indifferently.

"Jessie's invitation! When did that come?" said Emeline.

"Two hours ago," said her mother, "with a note from Mrs. Chetard, begging pardon for having omitted it when the others were sent. She said she had just learned that I had a young friend with me, and hoped she would pardon what looked like incivility, and be sure to come."

"I am much obliged to Mrs. Chetard; but I cannot go," said Jessie, quietly.

"Why, my dear, I should be sorry for you to miss an opportunity you may never have again in your lifetime."

"I have nothing to wear, aunt Ingham."

"That is a decided obstacle," interposed Pauline. "One would hate to be shabbily dressed at such a brilliant affair."

"I have a washed white muslin that you are perfectly welcome to; and Pauline, I am sure, would be delighted to lend you her scarlet satin sash and coral *parure*," said Emeline, maliciously indifferent to her sister's angry looks.

"Thank you, Emeline; but I think I prefer to stay at home and entertain uncle."

"Thanks, Jessie," said her uncle; "that is more than either of my daughters ever said for me, old clothes or not. Come and pay me a visit in my study, and we'll talk it over."

Wondering much what he could have to say on the subject, Jessie followed her uncle. To her surprise and delight, he told her that he wanted her especially to go to Mrs. Chetard's party, and as a new dress was requisite, that new dress she should have; so he put into her hands a sufficient sum for the purpose, particularly desiring that she should purchase a silk, and that it should be pink.

Now you may think that because Jessie had lived in the country most of her life, she knew nothing at all of the proper style and cut of a lady's attire. But you are mistaken. Jessie had an innate knowledge of what was truly tasteful. Besides, she had not been in New York two weeks without finding what was the especial direction of the reigning mode. So, on this occasion, she quietly made up her mind to consult no one, but follow out her own ideas, and have a costume adapted to her style, and yet according to the prevailing fashion.

The evening of the ball arrived. Jessie's dress was perfect. I shall not attempt to give you any description of it, beyond that it was peach-blossom pink, and that there was a pan-lier and over-train of clear white muslin. I will not add another word, except to remind you of how white Jessie's round arms, bare from the elbow, looked under the ruffles of that filmy old lace of Mrs. Thurston's, that came into play to add perfection to a Marie Antoinette toilet; or how the wreath of pink roses nestled among the curls and puffs of rich brown hair, that matched in color her starry eyes.

It is enough to say that the dress was as pretty as a dress could be, and that Jessie looked as she had never done before. If that loving mother, far away in the poor little house in the country village, praying for every joy

and blessing for her darling, could only have taken one look at her then.

Jessie was a little late, and her cousins were already impatient, standing in full costume down stairs, to be inspected by their father when she descended.

"Why, Jessie, you are quite dazzling," ejaculated Mrs. Ingham.

Pauline and Emeline pretended not to look at her, which fact, coupled with a studied avoidance of the subject of dress and appearance, on the way to Mrs. Chetard's, gave little Jessie an uneasy feeling that she did not look especially well, after all.

The ball, as far as Miss Jessie Ingham was concerned, was a triumphant success. Her aunt made many skillfully directed efforts to keep her in the background; but that was impossible to do. Jessie was most radiant, and her costume was undeniably elegant and stylish. So many partners, so much attention—Jessie thought a ball the most enchanting experience to be imagined.

Mrs. Chetard came up, during the evening, to present "her nephew, Mr. Everhard Field."

Jessie recognized in an instant Foss' master, and the recognition was mutual. Jessie was astonished that they should meet again. Mr. Field showed no surprise, but a vast amount of satisfaction, which he testified by remaining not far from Jessie the whole evening. If he liked to be near her, she was anything but displeased: the other men might dance well enough, but none of them danced as Mr. Field: the other men might talk well enough, but they were nothing to Mr. Field: she had seen him before; she felt that intuition which it is so sweet to follow, that he was her friend.

"Hasn't Foss spoken of me frequently, since the other day, Mr. Field?" said Jessie, saucily, as they promenaded down the long hall.

"Not in so many words, Miss Ingham, but he has been visibly dejected. I think that Foss and myself are in need of the same remedy."

"What is that?" said Jessie, with curiosity.

"I am sorry to disturb your promenade, Jessie, my dear," said her aunt's soft voice at this moment, "but I am just about to make my adieus. Mr. Field, you are fixed in town for the winter, I hope?"

"As far as I can see, Mrs. Ingham."

"You have kept yourself so far from us, for the last years, that you have almost forgotten what pleasures New York can offer you during our gay winter months. We will have to show him, won't we, Jessie?"

"I shall certainly test your capacity, Mrs.

Ingham. I accept that offer on the spot," said Mr. Field.

Nothing could be more smiling and attentive than Mrs. Ingham's manner was to Mr. Everhard Field, or more affectionate to Jessie. Jessie was puzzled over her evident desire to win Mr. Field's attention.

"I will do myself the pleasure of calling to-morrow," said Mr. Field, as he put Jessie in the carriage.

"Well, Jessie," said Mrs. Ingham, as they rolled homeward, "your pink dress and your winning ways have done you some service if you have caught Mr. Field. Do you know, child, that Everhard Field is the catch of the season—he is worth, without exaggeration, two millions."

"How absurd, mamma," said Pauline, "to say a man is caught just because he dances a few times with a girl."

"There were many black looks cast upon you to-night, I can tell you, Jessie," pursued her aunt. "Mr. Field is considered a star of the first magnitude: he is a peculiar sort of man, too; he receives all overtures with great composure, and takes good care not to show the slightest preference for any one of our belles."

"Does he?" said Jessie, absently. She was thinking that if Mr. Field was so rich and sought after, there was very little chance that he would take any more notice of her.

The next morning, Jessie began the delightful task of transcribing to her mother all the delights of the ball: the dancing and the throng of beautiful girls were dwelt upon at great length; and you may be sure Mr. Everhard Field held a prominent place in Jessie's records. These labors were broken by the announcement that Mr. Field himself was in the drawing-room, and had especially asked for "Miss Jessie Ingham."

"Oh, dear!" thought she, with a sigh, "nothing to go down in but this old brown dress; he will wonder what has become of the young lady in the pink silk."

It was not without a very uncertain and fluttering heart that Jessie descended the staircase. She paused a second at the drawing-room door. "Now he will see what a poor, awkward country girl I am," she thought.

Mr. Field did not seem to see anything of the sort. He saw what he thought the sweetest, frankest little face in the world: the slight shade of embarrassment thrown over her was not the thing to injure her effect in the eyes of a man like Everhard Field. Pauline and Mrs. Ingham were brilliant and amusing in their

conversation; but Mr. Field, with most pointed courtesy, addressed the greater part of his remarks to Jessie, and in an unobtrusive way was so evidently taken up with her, that Mrs. Ingham felt like biting his head off.

As he rose to take leave, Mr. Field asked Jessie if she would drive with him in the afternoon, an invitation which she accepted with inward delight. Whatever tact Everhard might display in bringing her into the conversation with her aunt and Pauline, she could not get over the restraint that their presence invariably inspired; and to talk and laugh at will, when she knew she would find ready sympathy and appreciation, was a keen pleasure in anticipation. Mr. Field was impatient to have his little wild flower all to himself. He could see that Jessie, under the eye of her suave aunt, and the smiling and animated little Jessie of the ball-room, were two different creatures.

That drive was one of unalloyed pleasure to Jessie, and so satisfactory to Mr. Field, that he proposed a walk the next morning. Every day, through some excuse, he found himself in Jessie's society. There was always some expedition that they must make together. Such rare and beautiful baskets of fruit and flowers appeared, with the invariable address, "Miss Jessie Ingham," that Mrs. Ingham was ready to die of envy at the evidences of Mr. Field's wealth and generosity. There is something imposing in being brought face to face with wealth. Mr. Field's equipage, and horses, and servants, impressed Mrs. Ingham with profound respect every time she saw them, because for one reason they were, so to speak, in the market; and she was filled with wrath to think that, instead of her Pauline, it was her country niece who seemed destined to have these things.

"If I can only keep the man from proposing," she thought; "and get her home, there may be some chance for Pauline yet."

But she was too wise to betray herself by speech or manner. If Jessie did come into possession of that magnificent establishment on

Madison Avenue, Mrs. Everhard Field in embryo was not to be slighted.

"Have you ever heard Parepa sing, Miss Jessie?" said Mr. Field, one Monday afternoon, as they sat in the drawing-room.

"Never," said Jessie, trying to perform an intricate stitch in crochet that Emeline had showed her.

"Then you will, to-morrow evening, when we to the Philharmonic Concert."

"Philharmonic Concert! I am not going to Philharmonic Concert."

"What! Did I not tell you that I had tickets? Did I not ask you to go with me?"

"Never!" said Jessie, laughing.

"But you will go, won't you?"

"I don't know," said Jessie, gravely, "I don't know that I ought to spend my last evening in New York away from home."

"Your last evening in New York! Surely, you do not go on Wednesday!" he cried.

"I fear I must," she said, unable to repress a rising color at Everhard's slight start.

"Jessie," said Mr. Field, in a low voice, "I cannot let you go without leaving me some promise that I shall see you again. I have been so happy in these last few weeks with you, Jessie—from my heart I love you. Only tell me, that I may have that happiness forever."

"But I have known you such a short time," faltered Jessie.

"That is nothing, nothing at all," said Everhard, eagerly. "If you can care a little for me, it is all that I ask now. Only tell me that you trust me, and will give yourself to me."

"I do trust you," said Jessie, lifting her frank eyes to his.

"And the rest."

Her answer was not distinctly audible, but he was satisfied; and it was Mr. Everhard Field who accompanied Jessie home.

Mrs. Everhard Field has a house on Madison Avenue, and a villa on the Hudson, and her aunt, in consequence, is the most assiduous and eager of her "thousand friends."

MY BARGAINS AT AUCTION.

BY MARY V. SPENCER.

"Goin', goin', gone," cried the auctioneer. "Spencer, you say; and a cheap lot, ma'am."

I was proud of my bargain. The chairs were new, of walnut, and covered with crimson plush. The price, too, was ridiculously low. At least, I thought so, then.

Nor had I secured my chairs without a struggle. Mrs. Jerome particularly had bidden steadily against me. Mrs. Jerome was a sort of rival of mine. She was always striving to outshine me. If I bought a new bonnet, or appeared in a new wrap, the next Sunday she was sure to have a new bonnet also, or a new cloak, both prettier than mine. On this occasion she bid against me, till Miss Almira Smith, an old maid whom I cordially disliked, and who, I believe, disliked me as heartily, went to her and whispered in her ear. After that she stopped bidding, and the chairs were knocked down to me, as I have told.

I was leaving the auction-room, elated with my victory, when Mrs. Jerome came up.

"Good-morning, Mrs. Spencer," she said, with ill-concealed triumph in her voice. "I wish you joy of your bargain. The chairs, as the auctioneer says, are very cheap. I only hope they haven't moths in them, as Miss Smith says."

She curtsied, and passed on, before I could reply. I went home not quite so elated as before. What if the chairs really had moths in them? But the idea was too provoking to entertain, so I dismissed it summarily. "You old cat," said I, apostrophizing Miss Smith, "it's only a bit of your malice!"

When the chairs came home, all my exultation returned. Their gay covering brightened up the parlor like spring sunshine. I had never had walnut chairs before, and was naturally proud of my acquisition. My husband came home to tea while I was admiring my furniture.

"Hum!" he said. "A new toy. Looks like auction-work," he added, as he turned one of the chairs, critically, around.

Now this nettled me. Not only because he called the chairs "a new toy," but because his tone was disparaging to auction-work. So I replied, a little tartly,

"I don't see why you call them toys. Gracious knows, we've wanted new chairs ever so long! I've bought them out of my savings."

"It wasn't that, my dear," he added, coming up and kissing me. "I'd have given them to you in a moment, if I'd known they would have pleased you. The truth is, we men care so little for these things," he continued, apologetically, "that we don't always realize how much pleasure they afford our darling little wives."

This mollified me a good deal. But I was not quite conciliated yet. So I said, with a pout,

"I don't think you're fair, when you sneer at them as auction-work. Why shouldn't things, that are sold at auction, be as good as things sold in shops?"

"Why shouldn't they?" he answered; and now he put his arm around my waist, and drew me to him. "I'm sure I can't tell, only they never, or rarely, are. I've a dim idea," he continued, looking laughingly into my eyes, "that auction-work is made to sell, not to use; and hence that show is substituted for strength. But let us hope that our chairs will be paragons of usefulness as well as of beauty. Meanwhile, what has my little wife got for supper?"

By this time I was quite restored to good-humor. The truth is that Harry is always so kind, that I can afford, now and then, to let him banter me a little.

On the whole, as time went by, I considered I had achieved a triumph. Everybody admired my pretty chairs, and acknowledged that they were surprisingly cheap also.

One day Deacon Staples came in. Now the deacon was a heavy man, and awkward also.

"I've hearn you had some new chairs," he said. "Darter Jane, she said they were 'mazing fine, and cheap as dirt. They don't look like dirt, though," he said, laughing at what he thought a joke, "they look, contrary-wise, too pretty to sit on."

"Not at all, not at all, deacon," said I, hospitably. "Pray, try one of them."

The deacon accordingly sat down.

"I declare," he said, "they're powerful nice. Soft and easy as a feather-bed, ma'am; and rest the back so comfortably."

As he spoke, he tilted back, on the hind-legs of his chair, a feat which I have noticed fat men are addicted to, when lo! the supports gave way, and he sprawled on the floor.

Between mirth at his ludicrous appearance, and anger at the mishap to my chair, I hardly knew whether to laugh, or to cry. The amazed look of the victim, and his evident inability to get up without assistance, turned the scale in favor of the former. I gave him a helping hand, smiling as I tugged at his heavy bulk.

"Don't think of apologizing," I said, kindly, "he began to stammer his regrets. "It was the fault of the chair altogether."

By this time the deacon was on his feet, and was examining the broken legs. "Well, I dunno," he said, "but what you're right. Seems to me it's auction-work, now that I come to look at the oheer."

The hideous old hippopotamus! When he left, I flung myself on the sofa, and had a cry.

My husband, coming in to dinner, found me wiping my eyes and ruefully contemplating the broken chair. He listened, sympathizingly, to my story, and then said,

"Never mind, Mary. We'll have the chair mended, and it will be as good as new. The deacon weighs as much as an elephant, anyhow, and would break down a chair of marble. For my part, I think he ought to sit on a stump, and carry it about with him wherever he goes."

The picture of the deacon carrying a large stump of a tree about with him, when he went

visiting, was so ludicrous that I burst out laughing, and so forgot my annoyance.

The weather now began to get warm. One day, while dusting the parlor, I was startled by the sight of a moth-fly, a thing, up to that time, unknown in our neat household. The next day there were two or three. I remembered, with dismay, Miss Smith's assertion, and began immediately to examine my new purchase. A blow or two on the chair-seats raised swarms of the destructive insect. The stuffing was alive with moths!

I tried everything, for many weary weeks, to get rid of the pests. But all was in vain. The moths had evidently been in the chairs when I bought them; and Miss Smith's prying eyes had discovered them just in time to make a victim of me, instead of Mrs. Jerome. Very soon it came to be a question, not of keeping my chairs, but of preserving the rest of my furniture; and in self-defence I had to send my chairs to a cabinet-maker's, where the stuffing was taken out, the wood cleaned, and new horse-hair substituted. By the time this was done, and fresh plush put on, my chairs cost me, as the phrase goes, "a pretty penny."

My husband, however, behaved beautifully. He did not then, nor has he since, uttered a word of reproach, or even of reminder, about the chairs. The subject is a sealed book between us.

But other people are not so forbearing. The other day I met Mrs. Jerome in the street.

"You didn't have such a bargain in those chairs, after all," she said, with hypocritical politeness. "I saw them, last week, at the cabinet-maker's, and knew them at once. I suppose, now, what with new hair, and new plush, and new varnishing, they've cost you half as much again as if you'd bought a set from Mr. Jordon at first: he said they had, at least, and he ought to know."

Hateful creature! I could have struck her, if it had been proper. But I answered, civilly, as I always do, in such cases. Only I made a vow to myself never to have anything to do again with **BARGAINS AT AUCTION**.

SOMETHING OF A FLIRT.

BY ELLA RODMAN.

"Now, Georgie, do go and dress. You know how long it takes you. Mr. Millfield will be here before you are ready."

"Time enough, aunt Jane," replied the willful young beauty. "Harry and I haven't had our romp out yet—have we, Harry?"

As she spoke, she turned her head, roguishly, and looked over her left shoulder, where Master Harry, her baby brother, a little four-year-old, with chubby face and curling hair, the very image of a young Cupid, was perched triumphantly.

It was a pretty picture! The large cavalier hat, which Georgie wore, gave a sort of Vanddyke-like air to her face, making it look lovelier than ever; while the arch air of the child, peeping over her shoulder, added something of mischievousness to the whole. In spite of the sweet smile, of the large, loving eyes, and of the tender, mobile mouth, you saw that Miss Georgie Winterglade could be, on occasion, something of a flirt.

"There," she said, at last, putting the child down, "we have had enough for to-day, Harry. Now I must rush up stairs and dress. Aunt Jane has gone off in a regular huff."

It did not usually take long for Georgie to finish her toilet, but on this occasion her hair would not come right, and she was, consequently, behind time. At last she was ready, and taking her fan and gloves, she prepared to go down stairs to the drawing-room, where her escort awaited her: the said escort being a handsome young gentleman, well-bred, and born to an excellent position in society, Mr. Frederick Augustus Millfield, to whom she was said to be engaged. But before leaving the upper floor, she passed into the next chamber, where the very queen of old ladies sat, in a large, crimson chair, before an open grate fire.

"Now, grandma," she said, with a look of mischief and conscious power, "how do I look?"

Mrs. Winterglade was pronounced "charming" by old and young; and was quite as great a belle, in her way, as her more slightly grandchild. The girl was not unlike her, and the starry lustre of those sixty-year-old eyes was reflected, more brightly, in the eyes of twenty. Her widow's dress had not been changed for thirty years: it was nearly covered with crepe,

so thick that it had the softness of velvet; while the plain, white cap was of snowy freshness. Beautiful hands, that had been painted, and modeled, and kissed, and quarreled over, lay in her lap; and the still handsome face wore an affectionate smile, that had yet something of sadness in it, as her eyes rested on the figure that curtsied and *pirouetted* before her.

"Your mirror has already told you all that I think," said Mrs. Winterglade, fondly; "but I am afraid, dear child, that you have quite forgotten Mr. Millfield, who must really feel hurt by this time."

"She generally does forget Millfield," remarked Aunt Jane, who sat on the other side of the fire; "and if I were Frederick Augustus—"

"What would you do now, aunt Jane, provided you were twenty years younger, and had a legal right to call yourself a man and a brother?"

"I would transfer my affections to a girl who had some heart," was the reply, in an irritated tone; for aunt Jane was not at all pleased with the allusion to her age.

The transparent skin that seemed almost drawn over the lady's thin face was deeply flushed, as Miss Georgie threw back her head and laughed as though she could not possibly help it.

"First, catch your fish," said she, saucily enough; "for, impossible as it may seem to you, auntie, I am really about as good as other girls—better than some of them. I do think I am rather nice-looking, and if I love to flirt a little—"

"A little!" was echoed from the corner.

"Go down, Georgie," said her grandmother, mildly, but in a tone that forbade trifling. "No guest in my house must be treated rudely."

"Yes, grandma," said Georgie, with a kiss that was enough to disarm any amount of anger, "you are the only one who can make me behave myself." Aunt Jane flushed again, and her head went up a few inches. "Do you know, though," she continued, "I am quite jealous of Frederick Augustus? I believe you think almost as much of him as you do of me."

Mrs. Winterglade rose deliberately, and taking the young lady's arm, walked her down to the parlor.

The brow of the young man, which had begun to look gloomy, cleared, as he beheld the glowing apparition, and he thought in his heart,

"If to her share some trifling errors fall,
Look in her face, and you'll forget them all."

"Have I been long?" asked Miss Georgie, very sweetly, when the gentleman had paid his respects to her grandmother.

This was fairly adding insult to injury; but he answered very creditably that the time always seemed long when he was waiting for her.

He might have said with truth that it not only "seemed," but was long. Miss Georgie, however, smiled benevolently, and vouchsafed no sort of apology for her tardiness.

But Mrs. Winterglade said, very sweetly, that her granddaughter must be excused this time, as her dressing-maid had been quite unsuccessful with her hair, and it had to be done over at the last moment. Mr. Millfield brightened perceptibly under her genial influence; and it added considerably to Miss Georgie's attractions, that she would put him in possession of such a charming grandmother.

"Mother," said aunt Jane, when Mrs. Winterglade returned up stairs, after the young couple had gone, "you really spoil that girl."

"Let us spoil her, Jane, in a measure," replied the old lady, with her hand on her daughter's, "my only son's, and your only brother's only daughter. Nobody but her, and poor little Harry left. These bright, young days come but once in a lifetime; we will strew her path with roses while we can."

But aunt Jane, or as she should more correctly be called, Mrs. Emmerton, did not approve the rose theory. Georgie, probably, supplied her path with too many thorns.

Meantime, let us follow our heroine to the ball-room. Whenever Georgie entered a room, there was a perceptible hush in the assembly. Malicious people had even been known to say that anxious dowagers figuratively gathered their sons under their wings, as though she were an improved edition of the wicked giant in fairy-tales. But be this as it might, she certainly made a sensation; and the gentleman in attendance always felt himself to be of less consequence even, if possible, than Mr. Toots.

Frederick Augustus realized this rather keenly, as several eager admirers rushed forward, on the evening in question, the moment Georgie entered; for Miss Winterglade's engagements were never looked upon in the light of other people's engagements—time alone

would prove whether she was really to be regarded as private property. There are some fortunate people who can do and say with impunity things that would not be tolerated, for a moment, in any one else; and Georgie Winterglade was one of these fortunate individuals. People talked, of course, and blamed her; but, nevertheless, these very people showered smiles upon her, and would stand on their heads, as the saying is, for the slightest mark of her favor.

Later in the evening, when Mr. Millfield, in obedience to orders, was endeavoring to make himself agreeable to another young lady—with at least one ear and eye on Georgie's words and movements—a very distinguished-looking man, in military undress, appeared in the door-way, leaning carelessly against the arch, as though he were undecided whether to enter or not.

Georgie's quick eye spied him, and made the rapid discovery that he was quite handsome, with a very heavy mustache and beard, and rather a fiery expression; that he was about forty, and evidently a stranger. She hoped he would come in, he was certainly very interesting. He did not move, however, for some time; and the young lady became quite restless, and changed her seat.

"Come, Hadleigh," said a gentleman to the new-comer, "don't stand there like an ornamental pillar, but get fairly into the room, and I'll introduce you to Miss Winterglade, the belle of this bright *parterre*."

"No; thank you," was the reply, "none of your Miss Winterglades for me—I have heard of the young lady, and intend to keep clear of her. I have been admiring a very lovely girl, the one yonder with those great, luminous eyes; introduce me to her, and your belle may continue to enchant the crowd at the piano, as I think she is doing at this very moment."

The gentleman smiled, but made no answer; and very soon after, Col. Hadleigh was presented to the object of his admiration, who turned out, to his astonishment, to be the dangerous Miss Winterglade, herself. Moreover, she had heard every word he said, and scarcely knew whether to be pleased or indignant.

As he was a man, however, she reasoned that it would do him no harm to be punished a little. He looked annoyed, she said to herself, though acknowledging that he had sufficient grounds for this. Falling quite naturally into the role of a very frank and artless girl, with the dimmest possible perception of her own charms, and a happy gift at turning flattering remarks into ridicule, Miss Georgie soon cast a subtle

apell over the colonel, who had never met any one quite like her, while poor Frederick glowered at them from a distance.

"I declare," remarked a very plain young lady to her sister, "how shamefully that Georgie Winterglade does behave! And the worse girls act, the more men seem to admire them. Just look at poor Mr. Millfield, fairly turned off, while she flirts with that conceited-looking colonel! I'll call the poor man over here—he seems so lonely."

Frederick obeyed the beckoning finger, as in duty bound; but did not seem to appreciate the interest he had excited. He answered so absently, that Miss Duffie bit her lip with vexation; and, finally, allowed him to glide away without making any further effort for his detention.

Miss Georgie was exasperating in the extreme, smiling up into the colonel's face, and listening as flatteringly to his words as though he had inherited the wisdom of the ages; while she quite forgot the waltz she had promised to Frederick, and treated him, when he crossed her path, as though she had been his elder sister.

"Georgina," said Mr. Millfield, quite sternly, when they were driving home, "how is this to end?"

"In other words," she replied, very tantalizingly, "you wish to know what my intentions are? I can only say, at present, that they will be developed by circumstances. Just now, I think seriously of going to sleep, as soon as my head touches the pillow. Do you know aunt Jane considers that she has had a very bad night, unless she falls asleep while she is preparing to retire?"

Something like, "Cruel, heartless flirt!" issued from Frederick Augustus' lips.

"Don't call names," said Miss Winterglade, amiably, "for I shall not call you anything."

Mr. Millfield was past speech, and could scarcely refrain from shaking his lady-love, as she lifted her out at her grandmother's door.

"Pleasant dreams, and a better frame of mind," was her parting salutation.

His dreams were delightful; the colonel (who appeared to him a very ugly, coarse-looking man) used him as a target for a murderous revolver; while Georgie looked on, smiling, and seemed to derive great satisfaction from the performance.

When Mr. Millfield's card was brought in, next morning, Miss Winterglade was not equal to the effort of seeing him.

"Now, Georgie," said her grandmother, quite sternly for her, "what does this mean?"

"It means, ma'am," replied the young lady, very meekly, "that Mr. Millfield, last evening, developed some traits of character that I do not admire; and an interview with him, this morning, would not be satisfactory to either of us."

"How about your traits?" asked aunt Jane, with a rather vicious twitch at her crochet-work.

"They are very well, thank you, ma'am."

Mrs. Winterglade glanced reprovingly at the naughty girl; and Mrs. Emmerton made a fresh attack.

"Did you meet any stranger last evening?"

"Yes, ma'am, I was introduced to a very handsome man, a Col. Hadleigh. He asked permission to call."

Mrs. Emmerton threw a significant look at her mother, and suddenly left the room; when Georgie, with a sigh of relief, dropped down on a cushion close to her grandmother, and gazed dreamily into the fire, as she remarked, "I can't realize that aunt Jane has really been married—she seems just like an old maid."

"I do not approve of your conduct, Georgie," said Mrs. Winterglade, gravely; "you are disrespectful to your aunt, and frivolous to your admirers. I tremble for your happiness ten years hence, if you are spared to see that time."

"Ten years is a long time, dear grandmother," said the girl, laughingly, as she caressed one of the beautiful hands; "besides, I intend to reform long before that. I do not mean to be naughty, but aunt Jane has a gift of drawing out all the bad in my nature. I think she is a good woman, too, and means well by me."

The soberly, reflective way in which this was uttered, caused Mrs. Winterglade to smile in spite of herself; but she discreetly turned away her head to hide it from Georgie.

"Your aunt Jane," said she, "was very attractive as a girl, with a delicate, peach-blossom kind of beauty, that is seldom seen. You know the romantic story of her first meeting with her husband?"

"Yes," replied Georgie, as though repeating a lesson long since learned by heart, "I remember. She was crowned with lilies, and barefooted, and left, like somebody or other in the mythology, on a rock in the water, by some mischievous girls, who promised to row back for her immediately, but, instead of that, they rowed to land to give her a good fright; and"

very handsome, young gentleman finally came to her rescue, and took her into his boat; and this was uncle Emmerton, whom I never saw. I have always envied aunt Jane that episode; why don't something romantic happen to me, I wonder? I'm all ready to be fallen in love with in some uncommon way, by some uncommon man; but I'm very tired of ordinary mortals."

"Rather extraordinary sentiments for a young lady who is engaged," said Mrs. Winterglade, disapprovingly. "What would Mr. Millfield say to all this?"

"But, grandamma, dear, I am not really engaged," interposed Georgie; "there is only a sort of understanding between us."

"An understanding for what, may I ask?"

"Why," with a little hesitation, "if we are satisfied with each other, we shall be engaged. But I do not think I am satisfied. I didn't like Mr. Millfield's conduct last night. He really seemed jealous and irritable; and I wish him to understand that I have not promised yet to forsake all others, and cleave only unto him."

The reader will, probably, think that Miss Georgie received only her just deserts in getting an unusually grave lecture from her indulgent grandmother; at least, aunt Jane did, who was about entering the room while it was in progress, but turned back, in a very comfortable frame of mind, to her own apartment.

Georgie cried, and promised amendment; and the dear, old lady began to think that "really she had been very severe to the poor child," and bestowed an extra petting on her when the lecture was over.

There were traces of tears in her voice, and a pensive expression in the "great, luminous eyes," that were Col. Hadleigh's especial admiration, when Georgie went down to receive that gentleman; and her conquest of the evening before was still more firmly riveted.

Miss Winterglade, after that morning, began to discourse in a new strain. She talked of having "some one to look up to," of "reverencing one's lover and husband," and expressed great disgust for "boys."

Aunt Jane "saw what it was coming to," as she said a number of times; and so did Frederick Augustus, who gnashed his teeth and retired at an early stage of the proceedings; while Mrs. Winterglade mourned over this strange fancy of the spoiled child's, and tried her best to discourage her.

"Think, Georgie," she would say, "of those four children!"

"I do think of them, grandamma," would Georgie reply, "dear little things! I mean to teach them all myself. Don't I teach Harry?"

Aunt Jane said but little. Yet she managed to get Georgie into a towering passion with her, one day, when a letter from Col. Hadleigh gave an account of the serious illness of one of the infants, by remarking that it would be a blessed thing for the child, and for Georgie, if it should be translated to heaven.

The step-mother elect declared that she would not part with one of them—there were not *any* too many—and such remarks were utterly savage and unfeeling. Aunt Jane was quite annihilated, and figuratively washed her hands of Georgie's affairs for the future.

People generally thought it a very presuming thing in Col. Hadleigh, a widower of forty, with four children, to appropriate pretty Georgie Winterglade. They could not imagine what spell he had cast over her. Others looked rather incredulous, and wondered how long it would last. The colonel was supremely happy, for not only the young lady herself, but all her surroundings, were perfectly unexceptionable. Mrs. Winterglade was a connection to be proud of; and her establishment had an air of wealth and refinement that had come down through several generations.

Col. Hadleigh was a very proud man, rejoicing in a family, that, he said, could be traced back to the Norman Conquest; and one of the highest praises he had to bestow on Georgie was that "she would grace a coronet." He hinted that there was a stray one floating around in his family, and some day it might actually rest on those beautiful locks.

The four children had all been to spend the day at Mrs. Winterglade's, and nearly deafened her with their noise; sticking up her best chairs with caddy, and roaring at the top of their lungs whenever their innocent recreations were interfered with. Aunt Jane said, very dryly, that those who loved them could enjoy the comforting conviction that they were not destined to early deaths.

One day, however, Miss Georgie tried her power with the colonel, and went too far. It was something like that story of the chivalrous period, where a lady tested her lover's bravery and devotion by dropping her glove into an inclosure containing some savage animal, and dared the gentleman to rescue it. She recovered her glove, but lost her lover; and so it was with Georgie. Her unreasonable demand was politely complied with; and she was as politely "released," as the colonel expressed

it, in an unexceptionable note, that she tore to pieces, and danced on; and then rushed to her grandmother with such white cheeks and flaming eyes, that Mrs. Winterglade was fairly frightened.

"Georgie," said the old lady, mournfully, when the full extent of this humiliation was made known to her, "you are very much to blame."

"Oh!" cried Georgie, in mingled anger and distress, "do send me away somewhere, grandmamma—I never can meet that hateful man again!"

And she comforted herself by throwing into the fire quite an elaborate doll, that she had been preparing for the eldest hope of the Hadleighs.

"I wish I could go into a convent!" added the young lady, as she reflected upon her very unpleasant position.

"You would be flirting with the priests before you had been there a week," remarked aunt Jane.

Georgie took this quite meekly; and even wondered whether a regular course of aunt Jane would not be a beneficial, though bitter, tonic. She cried, and her eyes were swollen, and her cheeks pale; and as it was impossible to scold her in this condition, her grandmother said kindly,

"Go to bed, my child—and in the morning we will talk this matter over."

Georgie went, and sobbed herself to sleep; more, it is to be feared, because the colonel had sent in his resignation, instead of being dismissed, than from any feeling of disappointed love. Frederick Augustus, and the other unfortunates, seemed likely to be revenged.

Mrs. Winterglade passed a wakeful night; blaming herself severely for Georgie's misdeemeanors, and wondering what disposal she had better make of her troublesome charge. As Georgie said, she could not meet the colonel again, which she was likely to do, if she remained in town; and as it was nearly June, a quiet country retreat seemed the best thing that offered. People like Mrs. Winterglade usually have such conveniences, and all others, at their command; a very obliging farmer-cousin and his family would, she knew, feel highly honored by a visit from the young lady; and as the place in question was as different as possible from Newport or Saratoga, a month's retirement in that quiet region would, probably, have a most beneficial effect.

Georgie made a wry face when cousin Gol-

ders was first proposed to her; but in the end, she acquiesced with a very good grace. She was glad to go somewhere, and it was not the season yet for anything exciting; besides, she had a dim, undefined sort of feeling, that, in some way, she was going to meet her fate, and that it was coming to her in a very pleasant shape. How could she tell but that it might be a second and improved edition of aunt Jane's adventure, with lilies and bare feet, on a rock in the water? It was not the season for lilies, but Georgie did not stop at this.

Aunt Jane packed Georgie's trunk with a sort of cheerful malice that was rather hard to bear, and even proposed accompanying the exile to her Siberia; but Georgie felt that this was making her punishment disproportioned to the offence, and resolutely declined.

Grandmamma was quite solemn at parting from her pet, and gazed after her wistfully, from the platform, until the train was in motion; but Georgie appeared to be in high spirits, and assured the old lady that in two hours' time she would be in the bosom of cousin Golders' family, and, perhaps, helping with the week's churning or baking.

She never got there at all.

She had disposed of her traveling-bag, and opened her novel; discovered that the inevitable woman and baby were on the right; the stout gentleman just behind; and the young man who stared, and is disposed to be officious, in front of her; but, becoming quite oblivious of all these surroundings, she was tracing her heroine through a most delightfully-romantic dilemma, to the total absorption of all things real.

Suddenly, there was a lurch of the car—a crash; another lurch, and Georgie was thrown from her seat. Darkness and confusion; a hand grasped her; she was raised in somebody's arms, and dragged through a window; but, quite unheroine-like, she did not faint, and was fully conscious that she had received several bruises.

She was considerably stunned, at first, by the suddenness of this unlooked-for episode; but remembering that some one had rescued her, she turned to look upon her preserver; and then she screamed for the first time, and hid her face in her hands.

It was Frederick Augustus.

Never had he acquitted himself so well, both in act and speech; and he looked really noble as he said,

"I could not help it, Georgie. Do not think me guilty of the meanness of following you. I

took the train solely on business, with no knowledge whatever of your movements; and my surprise at seeing you, a few seats in front of me, was quite as great as yours now is at seeing me. Will you let me do what I can for you?"

The coals of fire were falling fast and furious, and Miss Georgie instinctively put her hands to her head. "You have saved my life," she murmured, "and I so little deserve it!"

"Georgie!" whispered her deliverer, "may I dare——"

"Only run into another train," said a gentleman, as he passed them; "grand smash-up, and several killed, I believe. All who have whole bones should be thankful."

Georgie shuddered, and drew closer to her protector. No need to go to the middle ages for chivalry, nor to swords and epaulets for bravery; this was more than being rescued from a rock in the water; and aunt Jane's little episode sank into nothingness beside it.

Mrs. Winterglade could scarcely believe her eyes, later in the day, when a carriage drove up, and the granddaughter, whom she had supposed safely domiciled by this time at cousin Golders, alighted, with the most tender assistance from Mr. Millfield. She was thankful,

after the first shock, that it was not a new admirer.

"Georgie," said the old lady, when they were somewhat quieted, and Frederick Augustus had taken his leave, "is there a fresh 'understanding' between you and Mr. Millfield? It seems to me that things look like it."

The crimson cheeks and fast-filling eyes were quite eloquent, as Georgie nestled up to her grandmother. "No, dear grandmamma, but with your approbation, there is now a firm engagement, as sacredly binding to me as the marriage-vow itself. You approve, do you not?"

"With all my heart, dear child. In spite of his quiet exterior, I always felt that there was a great deal in Frederick Millfield; but he must not take you away from me too soon."

"He is certainly very forgiving," remarked aunt Jane, who could not help saying it for the life of her.

Georgie left her nestling-place, and walked directly up to her aunt. Before the astonished lady could realize it, a kiss had been pressed on her lips, and a gentle voice whispered,

"He is forgiving, aunt Jane—will you be so, too?"

PUT OUT OF THE WAY

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE SECOND LIFE."

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 367.

CHAPTER VIII.

THERE were hours, during that day, when the dilemma before Fred Leeds almost drove him insane. Should he return to the old starving, ill-clothed, scoundrelly life in Bohemia, or should he follow up this chance of a wealthy marriage, no matter at what cost? At times, he would thrust the whole matter from him, and for a moment enjoy his segar, or his wine, or his own feeble joke at the club, as though the fat, German fiend had not his whole life in her flabby, unclean hands. But then the terrible dilemma would rise before him again, till his weak brain almost gave way before it.

He dined at home. The colonel requested Mrs. McIntosh's presence in the library, and left the young people alone over their dessert. Then Fred proceeded to put a plot into execution, of which he had been thinking for the last few hours. He had never mentioned the Wortleys to Lotty, since the first day they met Dick in the Park. But he plunged boldly into the middle of the subject now. Lotty's gentle voice, and pitying, brown eyes fixed on him, gave him courage. The pear was so very ripe, he thought, it would be a shame not to pluck it.

The truth was that Fred's features were sharpened and haggard; and Lotty, who was fond of the "kind, little fellow" in a certain way, watched him as his mother might have done, longing to administer some of her darling homeopathic doses.

"You are intimate with Mrs. Wortley, they tell me, Lotty?" he began.

Lotty donned all her armor in an instant. She was clothed in steel, complete, before Fred had half cracked his almond.

"She is my aunt. I like her. Yes."

"The old lady's well enough," carelessly. "It's Dick that I'd guard you against."

"Why, he is a friend of yours, Frederick."

"Of course," coolly. "A very proper acquaintance for me. But for a young girl tenderly reared—that's another thing."

There was one sharp glance from Lotty, and then she went back to the flowers beside her plate, and began to pull them to pieces,

playing with the dog beside her, half humming a tune the while.

"You are not listening, I'm afraid," Fred resumed.

"Oh! I beg pardon! Certainly. You were talking of Mr. Wortley. You said he was—was——"

"No fit companion for you. He is coarse and vulgar. None of the men in our set would have introduced him to their mothers or sisters. You noticed how I tried to avoid presenting him to you?"

"Yes, I noticed." There was a quiet, amused smile on Lotty's mouth. She kept her bright eyes on Fred's face.

"There are some odd stories afloat about Wortley, which I would not mention to you, only that you may know how to estimate him. It was only last month he was up before the Police-Court on a criminal charge."

Lotty half rose from her chair, her eyes glittering. "I do not believe it," she said. Then quietly sinking down again, she added, calmly, "You are mistaken, Frederick."

"No mistake, 'pon my honor. It was in the police report. Assault and battery. Charged on a couple of policemen, who were taking some woman off to the Tombs. A kind of woman of whom I cannot speak to you. One of his companions. There is the paper," passing it over to her.

She took it and held it a moment.

Curiosity, strong in man or woman, was raging within her; but, being a woman, she was able to conquer it. She laid down the paper without a glance. "It does not matter. I know Richard Wortley," she said, quietly.

A great load was taken off of Leeds' mind by her manner.

"You believe it without reading? Well, it is true. The only excuse for him is that he was under the influence of liquor—Richard drinks, and drinks hard. I have known it for years, and it enables me to explain much of his discreditable conduct. I always accounted for his mad folly about the Warford will in that way."

"The Warford will?"

"Did you never hear of that? But, of course, you did not. The Wortleys would be glad to smother it, no doubt; and we would be slow to tell you anything so shameful of a relative. Warford was a queer old party, a grand-uncle of Mrs. Wortley, or something of that sort; a miser, to tell the truth, with no heirs, except one son, whom he had disinherited years before. He took a fancy to Dick, who humored him, gave him first-class lunches at the restaurants, and nursed him when he fell sick. Played a bold game for the money, you see! In consequence, when the old man died, Dick was brought in sole legatee, the son cut off with the price of a suit of new mourning. Now, you know, the Wortleys are poor. They live from week to week on the sale of those daubs of his, and they never lay by a penny. Dick's hand is happiest in his pocket, flinging out dollars like pebbles; and when all are gone, then to work again. So you may know what a godsend this fortune was to them. The old lady is a dead weight on his hands, too, and this money would have put her comfortably out of his way, and left him free to follow his own devices."

"And that is your judgment of Richard Wortley!" Lotty's brown eyes flashed fire, as she broke out thus. But the next moment she controlled herself. "Go on, Frederick," she said, quietly, "I am listening."

Fred watched her speculatively, a moment, with his light eyes half contracted. "You do not agree with me, I perceive," he said, with studied courtesy. "You think him a devoted, self-sacrificing son, no doubt. Hear the sequel, then! This affectionate son, this sound, reasonable man of business, gets drunk one day, (my charity suggests that excuse,) and by a stroke of his pen leaves himself and his mother paupers."

"I do not understand," she said, with a bewildered look.

"Gives back the estate to Warford's son—houses, land, and stocks; plays my Lord Marquis of Carabas; invites young Warford, if he wants to show his gratitude, to buy a couple of his landscapes. 'You'll lose nothing by it,' he said, with his sublime conceit. 'Ten years hence there will be a demand in the market for all I can paint.' Fact! I had the story from Ingoldsby, who saw the whole transaction. Then my man lights his segar, and saunters home to his mother, whom he had beggared."

"And Warford?" said Lotty, who had listened with bated breath and glistening eyes.

"Warford? He was struck dumb, Ingoldsby said. I suppose he thanked God for sending brandy into the world."

"Richard was not drunk when he did that!" Fred laughed contemptuously.

"That was about four years ago," he said. "Wortley has been scraping his way in the beggarly fashion, you see, ever since."

"Have you any more stories of him like these?"

"I'll tell you some others another day, if they please you."

"They do please me," said Lotty, deliberately rising and looking at him steadily. "I thank you for them, Frederick. Whatever meaning you attach to them, they help me to understand Richard Wortley better."

Her manner, even more than her words, made him begin to doubt the wisdom of his Machiavelian policy.

He also rose. For the first time the chance of mistake flashed upon him. What if the fruit was not ripe? What if this girl, who stood quietly waiting, apparently to reveal some undisclosed secret concerning herself, was, in truth, indifferent to him? What if, while he had delayed and doubted, Wortley had actually won her?

It had been easy enough to debate, while he thought the result depended on his decision. But when the fact that it was beyond his power suggested itself, the money in the lead-mine, now forever gone from him, assumed gigantic and maddening proportions.

But Fred Leeds never lost control of himself. He went toward Lotty, and took her soft hand in his. It was hot. She trembled, and her whole frame throbbled with fever and repressed excitement.

He stroked her fingers gently. "Lotty," he said, soothingly, "I have tried to be your friend. I tried to take the place of a brother to you when you came among us a stranger."

"I know that," the tears in her eyes. "You were the only friend I had. But I have a nearer friend than you, and it is not wise to malign him to me."

Fred drew a long breath, and in that moment faced the worst. He met it gallantly. "I understand it," he said, in a tone of deep concern. "I had no idea that this was so serious a matter. I will not try to influence your attachment, Lotty," pausing between the sentences, apparently overcome by some secret feeling. "But this warning it is my duty to give. Richard Wortley is a man who has loved many women. But he has been true to none.

If ever the day comes when his love falls you, remember your—your brother, Lotty," with a feeble smile.

It penetrated all her indignation and touched Lotty, for she was a soft-hearted woman, and could not bear to see even a dog, justly or not, in pain. "You wrong Richard," she said, gently; "but it is because you do not understand him. I never doubted your friendship for me, Frederick."

He raised her hand to his lips and held it there. At the same moment a servant opened the door, and announced "Mr. Richard Wortley."

CHAPTER IX.

FRED went forward cordially, both hands out, to meet him. "My dear fellow! I am delighted to see you!" he cried.

Lotty drew back with a shy greeting, the happy blushes dyeing her very throat. Dick alone stood motionless, the purple blood in his face, looking sternly from one to the other. He put his hand on Leeds' shoulder, with a contemptuous shake, as though he had laid hold of an unclean spaniel.

"Knowing your secret as I do, Leeds," he said, under his breath, "it is hardly wise in you to touch, with your foul lips, the woman to whom I am betrothed."

Fred had hardly time to draw himself away when his father entered. The colonel was grave, and moderate, and genuine beyond parallel to-night; his iron-gray hair, his slow, thoughtful smile, his steady, reasonable eyes, were calculated to inspire the world with the belief that one middle-aged man in it had absorbed more than his share of respectability and truthfulness.

He paused a moment, with Dick's card in his hand. "Wortley? What, my old friend Sophy's son?" holding out his hand, and surveying him from head to foot with a grave, pleased smile. "Why, here is a fine young fellow, that has taken his place in the world without my knowledge! A boy that ought to gladden his mother's heart! Your visit was to me, I understand? Will you follow me to the library? You can return and make the acquaintance of these young people presently, if you will."

Now Dick had come to the house, filled with utter contempt of the two miserable adventurers, father and son, who had Lotty in their clutches; feeling no especial obligation, either, to conceal this contempt. To be thus benevolently scanned and approved, as a school-boy

would be by his teacher, was, therefore, in no-wise conducive to the soothing of his galled temper.

He followed the colonel, determined to make short work of it. It was not the first time he had broken into a nest of soft, slimy snakes. There was a very certain mode of treatment for them—trample them down without mercy. As for these weak, miserable tricksters, the game was in his own hands.

In short, Master Dick never had a better opinion of his own ability and astuteness, than when he followed the colonel.

In a very few moments the library-bell rang, and a message was sent for Frederick. As the latter crossed the hall, he encountered Mr. Westcott, one of the new friends whom Col. Leeds' dinners had brought to him that winter.

"A word with your father, Fred, my boy, about that pair of trotters, unless, as John says, he is engaged."

Fred opened the library door, disclosing Dick Wortley hot and with knitted brows, but seeming as an angry man always does, to fill the whole center of the stage; the colonel to the left, cool, grave, smiling.

The latter glanced at the intruders from under his shaggy brows.

"Ha! Mr. Westcott?" he said, cordially. "Come in, come in. Come in, Fred. No intrusion, I assure you, Westcott. My business with Mr. Wortley is concluded, and as it is of the pleasantest nature, I see no reason why you should not share in it. An old friend of the family, you understand, Mr. Wortley?"

To which Dick returned an indifferent nod for answer, looking down from the height of his scorn on these pretty surmises, as but so much writhing of the reptiles on whom he had set his heel. Poor Dick! for whom every word and trivial gesture of that interview became afterward laden with life or death.

"Frederick, our young friend has come to inform me of a betrothal existing between himself and my ward, Miss Hubbard. I called you here to welcome him among us."

Fred's face glowed with pleasure. "Hillo, Wortley, old fellow!" he cried, clasping Wortley's hand; and he was silent for a moment, apparently from emotion, but, in fact, because he must have breath to consider what game his father meant to play, and how he was to follow suit. "This is a strange surprise. You have come to ask my father's consent, eh? And gained it, no doubt. He is the most indulgent of guardians."

"Why, no, Fred," interposed the colonel,

in a gently grieved tone. "Strangely enough, Mr. Wortley has *not* come for that purpose. I think I deserved the usual courtesy, for, as you say, I have not been a severe guardian. However, young people alter old customs," with an indulgent smile to Westcott, who looked curiously from one to the other.

"I did not ask your consent to my marriage with Miss Hubbard," said Dick, "because I knew, if you had the power, you would refuse it. You have not the power, fortunately. I detest shams, and all tricks of ceremony. In three months Miss Hubbard will be of age, and at liberty to make her own choice."

"She remains in my house after that by the terms of her father's will," said the colonel, quickly.

"Until she leaves it for that of her husband. My only wish, in seeking this interview with you to-night, was to inform you of our engagement, because I hoped, that, when it was made known to you, Miss Hubbard would be free from annoyances to which she is now subjected."

There was an awkward pause.

"Now, my dear boy," said the colonel, in a tone of the friendliest remonstrance, "why do you persist in this unaccountably aggressive conduct? You had every opportunity to woo and win Lotty, in the usual way by which maidens are wooed and won. Your mother's son would always have been welcome in this house. Instead of which, you meet her clandestinely. The first intimation I receive of your acquaintance with my ward, is an announcement of your intention to marry her in three months, and your resolve to place yourself in position as her chosen knight to defend her against some chimerical persecution, which you conjure up for her in this household. May I ask," with a good-natured, bantering smile, "what is this persecution of which you complain?"

"Do you wish an answer now?" said Dick, glancing significantly at Westcott.

"Assuredly. I have no secrets in this matter from any one, least of all from an old friend. I am sincerely anxious to know what injustice you complain of." And he feigned to listen with real curiosity.

"I complain of this," said Richard, slowly. "That, from the day you took charge of Miss Hubbard, it has been your design to obtain possession of her fortune, and failing other means, you would have forced a marriage with your son."

Col. Leeds turned to Westcott with a deprecating shake of the head, as if to crave his

forbearance for the rude passion to which he was unwillingly a witness. Mr. Westcott felt it incumbent on him to take part with his friends.

"I think you are a little intemperate, Mr. Wortley," he said. "It is not a misfortune to any young lady, surely, to be sought in marriage by my young friend, Mr. Leeds."

"It is an insult for him to address, or touch her, as I saw him do, to-night," said Richard, turning in his blazing wrath upon the cowering little wretch himself. "Frederick Leeds is a married man."

There was a moment's silence. The colonel had been shading his eyes from the fire. He now laid down the screen carefully. But he did not glance toward his son. There was not the movement of a muscle in his face, though he knew that he had, at last, his son's secret.

Fred, as soon as he had breath, gave a contemptuous laugh.

"You know how true this is, father," he said.

"I have no doubt that he knows," continued Dick, calmly. "If I could, I would have removed Miss Hubbard from under your guardianship. As I could not, my only resource was to tell you, as I have done to-night, that she had a protector who understood your villainy to its depths. For the three months to come I will hold you in check."

As he spoke, poor Dick turned and went off with the air of a conqueror, thinking it was so sweet to fight any enemy, however ignoble, for the sake of the woman he loved! His heavy, firm tread echoed down the hall, pausing a moment at the door of the drawing-room. But Lotty was not there. Missing her, he passed down the stairs, with a sudden, vague sense of having been foiled, after all.

He wished that he could have told her to-night that Leeds was a married man. Not that he was jealous of the cool friendship which she had for the fellow. Still, it would have been better if she had this safeguard. He stopped, for a moment, in the hall, half intending to send for her; then his passion conquered him, and he stalked on, and out into the street. He could not breathe the same air, he said to himself, as these paltering scoundrels.

Dick Wortley had time enough, afterward, to recall every unhappy, mad act of that night, and to curse the day when he was born with the quick temper that led him to his ruin.

When the door closed behind Wortley, Col. Leeds looked up, with his ordinary easy courtesy.

"I regret so much, Westcott, that you have been annoyed in this manner," he said. "Take this chair nearer the fire."

"The young man has certainly been drinking!" said Westcott, who had stood aghast with astonishment, staring from one to the other. "I never heard of anything—anything like it in my life."

"It is rather an unusual method of asking the consent of a guardian to his ward's marriage," answered the colonel, with a smile. "A 'stand and deliver' fashion, not common in our modern days."

"Worse than that, sir! The reckless assertions about your son—about Frederick," with a keen glance at young Leeds, which both men noted. "Do you think he *was* in liquor?"

"No. The trouble lies deeper than that," in a grave voice. "I am loth to mention it, but——" and stooping over, the colonel whispered earnestly for a few moments, while Mr. Westcott listened with an occasional nod and a compassionate, "Tut! Tut!"

"I understand," he said, at last. "Of course, you will take proper means to rid your ward of the annoyance?"

"Certainly. I thought best to humor him for the present. But about those horses now, Westcott?"

When Fred Leeds, an hour later, heard Mr. Westcott's cab leave the door, he crept back to the library. His father was waiting for him, standing on the rug, with his back to the fire.

"This story is true, I suppose?" the colonel said, curtly. "You are really married?"

"Yes, it is true," answered the son, doggedly. "The woman may be here any hour. If you will give me my passage-money, I will go back to Paris by the next steamer. The game is up here."

The old man, stroking his grizzly whiskers, surveyed him with a cool contempt.

"Let me hear the whole of the affair. Keep nothing back," he said, at last.

He listened without comment, while Fred told the story.

"Then I understand this Wortley is the only person who holds this power over you?" said the colonel, when his son had finished.

"The woman herself."

The colonel made a slight, contemptuous gesture. "She can be easily silenced," he said.

"I wish that *he* could be silenced, in the one effectual way," muttered the young man, gritting his teeth as he rose. "I wish to God we

lived in the days of Bastiles." I wish, as in Italy, in other times, such a man could be got rid of for a few scudi. I'd put a knife into his heart to-night," he continued, his savage passion rising with his words, "if we were out of this cursed land of civilization. But every act of a gentleman's life is dragged into daylight here for the mob to gloat over."

"Not all," said the colonel, dryly. "A man can be got rid of for a few scudi, here, as readily as in Italy. Richard Wortley will not trouble you or me long."

Fred leaned his elbow on the mantle-shelf a moment, and stared at his father.

"You mean to—murder him?" he said, at last, under his breath.

"By no means," laughing. "Don't turn so white about the gills. I am no butcher. I won't risk a hempen-collar about my throat. No. There are Bastiles in the United States, by the aid of which any inconvenient person can be put out of the way for life. It is a quiet, safe means, which a gentleman can use with no fear of punishment. There must be secrecy, and—the *scudi*," with a laugh. "Only pay enough, and get up your case right, as the lawyers say, you have science and philanthropy both to assist you."

"What do you mean?"

"Ring for John to order a cab. What we do must be done before morning. To-morrow Wortley will make your marriage public. I will explain as we go."

In a few minutes the cab was at the door, and the two men, closely cloaked, entered it, and were driven away.

CHAPTER X.

THE night was stormy. A blinding fog swept over the city. Even on the most crowded thoroughfares the fitful cries of the wind, and the fierce strength of the tempest, dwarfed into a ghastly littleness the lights and hurrying tumult beneath.

The carriage, in which the two men were, left the open streets, after awhile, and turned into unfrequented lanes and alleys leading to the further disreputable limits of the town. Young Leeds looked out uneasily, shuffling nervously in his seat. The streets were narrow and dark; here and there a lamp made a dull, red circle of light in the thick, black vapor. At long intervals a footstep of some invisible passenger echoed with a heavy reverberating thud. Fred knew himself to be nearing that labyrinth of courts and secret hiding-

places, where crime in New York holds high carnival. The very air grew thick and loathsome, as though from the smoke of some actual Tophet.

"Do you know the neighborhood, sir?" he ventured, anxiously, to say, at last. "This frontage of buildings is but a coating of respectability. Just behind them are the foulest pest-houses in New York."

"I know the place," was the calm reply. "Are you afraid?"

Fred writhed uneasily. "I have no wish to be entangled in any sort of crime," he broke out. "It's too risky. If I cannot win the game without the aid of thieves and murderers, I'll throw it up. Let us go back, sir."

The colonel put out his hand quietly as Fred caught at the check-string.

"I am not going outside of the law," he said. "It adapts itself to our necessities, fortunately, as completely as a glove to the hand. As for the thieves and murderers, and their companions in this street, I need the help of one or two of them; and the law, and science, and philanthropy, will receive them, in this case, as worthy coadjutors—for a consideration," he added, with a sneer. "Here is our place."

The cab stopped before a low, plain, two-storied house, with a red sign at the side of the door, on which was painted, "Doctor Molker."

The door was so promptly opened, at the first touch of the bell, that one might have suspected the doctor's patients usually came at night. The father and son found themselves in a small anteroom, and a stout, stoop-shouldered man came in, in his slippers and flowered dressing-gown, saying, in an unmistakable Jewish accent. "What can I do fair you, gentlemen?"

"I have a young friend," said the colonel, "whom it is needful to place under restraint for a time—for the safety of his friends——"

"Ah, yesh! For de safety of his friends?" gravely, rubbing his hands.

"It will require your certificate. I understood that you made cases of this kind a specialty?"

"Ah, yesh! Dat ish one of my specialties. I have orders. De human man ish subject to so many ailments, my gentlemen," wagging his head sorrowfully. "Ish it necessary dat your young friend be confined immediately?" with one keen glance at Leeds.

"Before morning. He is violent."

"Ah! dat ish sad! sad! I will get de certificate in one moments," opening the table-drawer and selecting a blank-book, from which

he tore a printed form. From the mantle he took down pen and ink. "I usually see de patients; but you so very respectable gentlemen dat your word is enough," scrawling his name rapidly at the bottom of the certificate. "How did you call de patients?" pausing, with the pen suspended.

"Wortley. Richard Wortley."

"Richard Wortley, it ish," writing it, and throwing some sand over it.

"What is your fee, doctor?" said the colonel, and drew out his pocket-book.

"I ask fifty dollars in de case where I do not see de patients," holding the paper under his hand. "You ish so respectable dat I think dat ish not necessary."

The colonel counted out the money, and the paper was handed to him, the Jew laying hold of his coat eagerly, the notes clutched in his other hand. "If your friend ish very violent, I would recommend——" lowering his voice to a whisper. "It ish a very quiet institution, and safe. But any of dem will do."

The colonel blandly thanked him, hastily loosening his grasp from his coat, and motioning Fred to the door.

"What ish your own name, my good sir? You did not mention it."

"I beg your pardon. Wetherall, John Wetherall."

"Ah, yesh! Well, good-evening, Mr. Wetherall! I hope your young friend may recover speedily. I shall be glad to see you again. I have oder specialties, as you call dem. I have a little money, too, to lend, when my friends get into trouble—friends like dis young man here."

He stood howing, and rubbing his hands, and glancing up and down, until they were out of the room.

The colonel drew a long breath, as the carriage-door closed on them. He was heated and excited: he had lost his usual calm reticence. "The foul wretch!" he cried. "It was no pleasanter errand for me than for you, Frederick. But he serves our purpose. One cannot always choose their tools."

"Of what value is that greasy slip of paper?" asked the son.

"Value?" tapping it triumphantly. "That printed slip, with our friend Molker's name on it, has all the power of a *lettre-de-cachet* in the worst days of the old regime. I have done my part in procuring it: the law will do the rest. I can call upon the police to assist me in clandestinely arresting Richard Wortley, and in imprisoning him for life if I choose. In a prison,

too, from whence no tidings of him shall ever come."

He was silent for awhile, and then broke out again, as though his success had intoxicated him.

"You were complaining of the meddlesome law in this land of civilization; complaining of the vulgar notoriety and daylight into which a man was obliged to drag all of his actions. Where else would we have had such facilities as these? If Wortley had committed a murder, he would have had the privilege of counsel and trial, before he could be punished; every particular of the case would have been aired and torn to pieces in the public press; but when you and I want him out of our way, we find a Dr. Molker ready to sign this paper for a consideration: and this paper consigns him to confinement for life, without judge or jury, or a chance to escape."

"And even Molker's signature was not necessary," he added, after a moment. "I could have written it myself, signed a fictitious name, and added M. D. There would have been no questions asked. But I will do nothing illegal. Could the law have done our work for us in old Italy? Bah! Remember her clumsy assassins and poison bowls?"

"You are playing a dangerous game," said Fred, after awhile. "Nothing is so well guarded in America as personal liberty. I know nothing of so fatal a flaw in the law as this you talk of."

"No one seems to know of it but those whose interest it is to use it," coolly answered his father. "You will see whether I have mistaken its power." He pulled the check-string and looked out. "To Police Station, No. 5," he said, to the driver.

CHAPTER XI.

It was near midnight, but Dick Wortley still lingered beside his mother's fire. He had all his plans to talk over with her; and Dick, as usual, was vehemently in earnest about the least of them; and then there was the sweet, new refrain coming in at every close. The quiet, fair woman, who sat listening to him, had fancied that she knew every pulse of her son's heart, since the day he lay a helpless baby on her breast. But to-night it seemed to her as though she never had gained insight into its depths before. She never had known how single-minded and credulous her boy was, under all his affectation of knowledge of the world; nor how full of delicate, tender

fancies, with which to crown the woman of his love.

For Lotty was the first woman he had ever loved. Platonic friendships and flirtations had left a crust of indifference about his heart; but when Lotty had pierced through it, she found a nature as pure as, and finer than, her own, to welcome and cherish her: and to convert, by its own magic, the affectionate, hot-tempered little country-girl into a half-divine maiden, who, in her purity and beauty, bore yet about her marks of the moulding fingers of the gods.

Mrs. Wortley, who thought Lotty, as she was, would make a better wife for Dick than any such wingless Psyche, yet listened to her son with the tears in her eyes. His words awakened, strangely, some old music in her own life, long ago silent.

Dick roused himself to the fact, however, that the clock was on the stroke of twelve, and got up hurriedly.

"I don't know why I have such a strange feeling of reluctance to leave you to-night," he said. "I feel as if I had gone back to the old boyish days, days when I used to bring all my troubles to pour out to you. What a fire you always keep, mother," he added, hastily, as if ashamed of words that bordered on sentiment. "Other people's fires char black, or are choked with ashes; but yours is always quiet and clear, shining to the very heart. Like you, you dear little woman," putting his big hand on the soft, gray hair.

His mother laughed.

"Your brain is on fire, my son," she said. "You see even a faded old woman through a rosy heat. You had better go to bed."

"Bed! I have half a day's work before me. I had a dozen new canvases sent home to-day, a new stock of paints and oils, which I must arrange. I'm going to work to-morrow in earnest. Three months is a short time to prepare for marriage. I mean to make enough on those canvases to take us all back to Europe, as soon as Lotty is my wife. We can live at half cost there. I'm sure of work, and I will be growing in my profession. You see what a practical, long-headed fellow I am, in the prospect of being a family man!"

"You forget Lotty's fortune."

"No; I don't forget it," turning red. "I will never touch a dollar of her money. Fred Leeds shall not taunt me with that motive, please God!"

"Which shows how practical a man you are."

"I'm afraid I've showed my lack of common sense in a worse way than that. I laid out

every dollar I had in my pocket for the materials to-day. However, Hooper's landscape is done, and he will pay promptly. It's a wretched way to manage, this hand-to-mouth habit of mine; but it comes from my Irish blood, I suppose. But I mean to grow canny and saving, now. Hillo! who the deuce can that be, so late at night?" for the door-bell was rung violently at this moment.

Jessy, half awake, entered with a note. Dick read it aloud. "It's from Sherman, mother," he said. "We met him at Strassburgh last, you remember? I will read it to you."

DEAR DICK—Just in. On the Cambria. Leave in the five o'clock train for St. Louis. If you could spare me an hour, to-night—there is a great deal I have to tell you. I send a carriage to avoid delay. Present my regards to Mrs. Wortley. Yours, C. SHERMAN.

Astor House.

"Go, by all means," said his mother, as he looked at her dubiously. "I wish you could induce him, Richard, to stay for a day or two,"

"It's not likely," said Dick, pulling on his overcoat. "I'll probably stay with Charley till he leaves for the West, though, mother. It wouldn't be worth my while to go to bed for such a bit of the night. You'll not be afraid? Make Jessy bring her bed into the next room, and double-lock the doors. I'll be at home by daylight."

"You'll lose your night's sleep, Richard," said his mother, anxiously.

Dick laughed, as he stooped to kiss her; and then hurried off. But, at the door, glancing back and catching sight of the pale, sweet face watching him earnestly, he stopped, returned and kissed her again, holding her cheeks a minute between his hands.

In time to come, the memory of that boyish kiss would come to her and fill her with hope and trust.

"He will come back to me," she would say. "He will come back as free from guilt as he went."

CHAPTER XII.

THE storm had increased in violence as the night wore on. The rain fell in torrents. Outside of the windows of the close carriage all was total darkness, except a dull glimmer now and then from the street lamps. Dick pulled up the collar of his coat, lay back in the corner, and abandoned himself to those sweet visions, which every lover will understand.

He grew so absorbed in them that he did not observe that the carriage stopped, while a couple of men mounted beside the driver, or that it was closely followed by another coach through every turn of its winding course.

He roused himself finally, trying to look through the foggy pane. "A deuced long time reaching the Astor House!" he growled. "Hillo! here we are at last," for they had stopped suddenly before a long, lighted building.

The door was flung open, and he sprang out on to the platform of a railroad depot. Two or three lamps were stationed along it at intervals. On one side of him the door of a waiting-room was open; behind it was a background of refreshment-stalls. Twenty or thirty passengers, with valises or umbrellas, were hurrying out. On the other side, close by his elbow, was the last car of a train just starting. The bell was ringing. Conductors were calling out with even a duller sing-song than by daylight.

Another time, and Dick would have sworn, but to-night he was in a good-humor with all the world. "Driver, you've made a mistake," he cried. "This is two miles from the Astor House. Where the deuce is the fellow?" he added, as, looking around, he saw neither carriage nor coachman.

A group of three or four men stood near. All at once these men closed about Wortley.

"I beg your pardon," he said, trying to pass between them. "I am afraid the driver will escape me, if I do not hurry."

"This is your way, sir," said one of the men, giving him a wrench by the shoulder, and pushed him toward the platform of the car.

Dick's answer was a blow, which hurled the man back. Then supposing it was a conductor, and that his blow had been too hasty, he half apologized. "You'd better find a civiler way of dealing with your passengers," he said. "But I'm not one of them."

The man, recovering himself, made a sign to the others, who closed about Dick again. Then, opening his coat, he showed Wortley the star on his breast. Lowering his voice to a whisper, he said,

"I have you in charge," with a significant nod.

"You mistake, sir," cried Dick, angrily. "I am not your man."

But the officer, who had a grave, kindly face enough, answered in the same considerably low tone: "There is a criminal charge against you. You had better come with me as quietly as possible."

Dick, who, after the first shock, began to find his senses and his usual self again, shook him off as a man might an eel that had wrapped itself about him.

"You have made some mistake, sir," he reiterated. "You have no criminal charge against me."

He was stalking off, when the others stopped his way.

"No doubt there is a mistake," said the officer, respectfully. "Or you may be able to prove yourself innocent. But it was *you* whom I was directed to arrest. I beg of you, for your own sake, to come with me without noise. My men have their billies, as you see. If you resist, it will only lead to exposure, and the story will come to your mother's ears. I deceived her so far by the note."

"Do you mean that Sherman——" cried Dick. He stopped, dazed and bewildered.

"I mean that the train is starting, and you must go aboard of it," answered the officer, now speaking sternly. "If you don't go quietly, my men will put you there. At the next station the affair will be settled," he added, more respectfully. "No doubt you can prove the mistake by a word or two. But I advise you to go quietly."

Dick paused a moment. There were six men to one. White-hot as he was with indignation, he yet had sense enough to see that the policemen were only tools in this mistake or insult. So he stepped into the car.

A few words would, doubtless, set it right, he thought, or reveal the principal in the affair. There was no use in brawling like a street ruffian, with half a dozen armed men against him. As he took his seat, two of the policemen strolled in and found places behind him.

The chief dropped back, and made a sign to two gentlemen, who were on the platform. They followed him to the smoking-car.

"All right," he said, with a mysterious nod.

"Less trouble than I thought."

"What pretence did you use?"

"Criminal charge."

"Very good, Miller, very good." It was the elder man who answered. His manner was grave and authoritative. He spoke in an ordinary voice, with no attempt at concealment, for the conductor had paused to listen, and the other passengers in the smoking-car began to send furtive and curious glances toward the group.

"You have managed the affair with great consideration for our feelings, Mr. Miller," continued the gentleman, with some emotion

in his tone. "I have telegraphed in advance, and as soon as the officers from the institution can meet us, you will be relieved of your charge."

"The sooner the better. I must be back before to-morrow night."

"Prisoner, eh?" said the conductor, snapping a ticket.

A dozen neighboring heads were turned to catch the answer.

The elderly gentleman answered, after a short pause, in the same slow, grieved voice,

"No. A young friend—a relative, whom I am removing to an asylum—for the insane."

"Tut! tut!" compassionately.

"Dangerous?" inquired a white-headed old gentleman, who sat smoking in the corner.

"No. The disease assumes more the type of melancholia so far, though the physician warns me he may become violent at any moment. I am obliged to remain out of his sight. He has conceived a strong antipathy to his nearest friends."

"Always the case, sir: always the case," said the old man, sympathetically; while all the other heads began to shake significantly. There was a little more conversation, and then the passengers dropped the subject.

As morning broke, and the men began to saunter from one car to another, Wortley noted the prolonged inspection with which each favored him as they passed, and the quickness with which their eyes were averted when they met his own. The old Connecticut man passed and repassed, each time with a lugubrious shake of the head when behind Dick.

"I fear he is growing violent, sir," he said, in a half audible whisper to the conductor.

"His face is very much flushed, and the eye is excited. You can always detect insanity by the eye, sir! I have had a great deal of experience."

"There is no danger with so many men on the car."

The conversation became general on the subject of maniacs, and much sympathy was expressed for the two gentlemen who had the unfortunate patient in charge.

"The elder is a man of great refinement and feeling, I soon saw that!" said the old gentleman. "I have no doubt that the poor young man is his son."

Before the sun had been up an hour, there was not a passenger on the train who had not heard the story. The ladies quietly changed their seats, leaving Wortley alone at his end

of the car with the two policemen behind him; the men kept a furtive watch on him, ready to anticipate his first movement of violence.

Now the train was an express-train: and Dick beckoned the chief up from his lounge by the stove, and began to question him in a low tone, but one which made the other passengers prepare to act on the defensive against an outbreak of fury. "I understood, from you," he said, "we were to be set down at the next station. This train runs through to——"

"You are to be brought before the court there."

"What for?" said Dick.

"I do not know," answered the policeman. "They will tell you in good time."

"But I never was in —— in my life. How can I be arrested for an offence committed there? Besides, I have committed no offence, neither there, nor anywhere. Gentlemen," and he turned, excitedly, to the passengers, "I believe I am being kidnapped."

The moment after, he was ashamed of the excitement he had shown, for no one interfered, and, on the contrary, he saw several shrug their shoulders. "I will wait," he said, to himself, proudly folding his arms. "I shall see a lawyer at ——, and then all will be right."

But as time wore on, his perplexity and shame grew maddening. For himself, it mattered nothing. But Lotty? The story of his arrest would, doubtless, be blazoned in the morning papers. And his mother? But she never saw the papers, she would not have even the miserable comfort that they could give.

He sat listening to the dull thud, thud of the engine underneath, picturing his mother's terror as the day wore on, and he did not return, remembering his guilty carelessness in money matters, which had left her without a penny. But it would only be for a few hours longer. When he reached ——, a telegram would quiet her until he could return.

Suddenly Miller came near him, and paused, making a sign to the men behind him. The train had stopped, for a moment, at a way-station.

"I can send a message home?" said Dick, turning to him.

"Certainly." The man had won Dick's confidence. He was only a tool, and had done his work as inoffensively as was in his power.

"I wish counsel at once."

"Of course. Counsel, of course. The law perfects every man." But he hurried out of the car as he spoke.

The whistle sounded, and the train rushed on. Dick looked round, Miller had not re-

turned. The policemen, too, had disappeared, and in their places were two short, brawny men, one Irish, and the other Dutch.

They were now in the suburbs of a large town. The bell rang, there was a long, grating sound, and the train stopped. Dick rose to his feet, breathless, with a sudden suspicion. The two men behind him rose as he did. He hurried out on the platform. They came, swift and noiselessly, and stood on either side of him. Miller was still nowhere to be seen.

A sharp-faced man, who stood near the door of a close carriage, at this moment came up. Speaking through Dick, as if to the men, not recognizing him any more than if he had been air, he said,

"Is this the patient?"

"Yes."

"Violent?"

"Not yet."

"This way," jerking his head to the carriage. But Wortley did not move.

"Where is Miller?" he said, sternly and angrily.

"This way," sharply said the man, for the crowd was gathering about them.

There was one moment of bewilderment, and then Wortley faced them, bracing his broad back against the wall. A glimmer of the truth had broken on him. His face was white, and his eyes on fire with all the repressed fury of the night; but his voice was low enough.

"There is some damnable conspiracy here," he said. "I am not a boy to be caught in it. Show me your warrant."

The two keepers pushed through the crowd and crowded against Wortley on either side, their eyes on the sandy-faced man in front. Dick brushed at them as though they had been flies, and they staggered back.

"Show me your warrant."

The men made no answer, but moved up to him again.

"Gentlemen," cried Dick, wheeling suddenly to the crowd, and speaking excitedly. "I was tricked out of my house at midnight, made a prisoner without the show of any legal authority, and am to be dealt with—God knows how! Is there no one here to help me?"

"My dear sir," said the white-headed old man, pulling Dick soothingly, with his valise in the other hand. "Do not be alarmed. You are an American citizen. Your liberty is secure. The law is your defence. Go with the gentlemen quietly."

"The law is my defence. I will see their warrant, then, before I submit to arrest."

"Here it is," said the man, in front of him, making a feint of drawing something from his breast-pocket.

Dick stepped forward eagerly. Like a flash, one keeper clutched his throat from behind, strangling him, while the other slipped the handcuffs on his wrists. Then, with a heavy, dexterous blow on the head, as though he had been a bullock, they sent him staggering to the edge of the platform, where he fell. One or two of the brakemen, lending their aid, he was dragged in on the floor of the carriage. It was all the work of a moment.

The door was quickly shut, the keepers mounted, and the carriage was driven rapidly away.

Dick lay, in a crushed heap, not even conscious of pain: he was senseless!

Meantime the train moved on again.

"Oh!" sighed a lady, who had watched the scene. "How thankful I am that he is secured!"

"A very dangerous case," said the old man from Connecticut. "I don't know that I ever saw worse symptoms in an eye. I should pronounce him incurable. But there is no knowing what science can accomplish now-a-days. Let us hope for the best."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE close carriage, in which Worley was driven, stopped before a frowning, stone gateway. A snuffy, old man came out from a lodge behind. There was a creaking of keys and drawing of ponderous bolts; then they rolled on into dreary, far-reaching slopes of half-thawed snow, set with grim cedars, a prospect terminated on all sides by a solid wall of stone.

There were fresh traces of wheels on the road before them, and a cab with smoking horses was standing in front of the massive building, to which all the paths led.

Within, in a high-ceiled, white-walled parlor, set with funereal haircloth-chairs, two gentlemen waited. They were Col. Leeds and his son.

An inner door opened, and a small man, with cold, gray eyes, entered, their cards in his hand.

"The Messrs. Wetherall?"

Leeds bowed. "Dr. Harte, I presume?" he said. "I have brought the patient, doctor. He is coming—just at the door." His ordinary gravity had given way, as the crisis of his venture approached. He was nervous and excited, and rubbed his gloved hands incessantly together.

Dr. Harte, on the contrary, spoke as though his body were a machine wound up to talk, while the real man were asleep, or gone on a journey. That unutterable eye, and voice, and wooden manner, is too often common to men whose daily routine brings them into contact with suffering. One wonders whether the indifference, assumed at first for prudence, has not penetrated deeper and deeper, till the whole man is actually hardened into a wooden puppet, only to be set in motion by duty, or what he thinks duty. Whatever the explanation be, it is a sad fact, that almost the last place to look for genial temper, or quick sympathies, is in the actual manager of any charitable institution.

"Yonder comes the patient," cried Leeds, pointing out of the window.

Dr. Harte scarcely glanced toward it. "He will be attended to," he said, calmly. "You have brought the necessary documents?"

"The certificate? Yes. Here it is," presenting it with illy-concealed trepidation. "Dr. Molker. You are acquainted with him?"

The Superintendent, glancing slightly at the scrawl, and folding it up, answered, "I have not that honor. There is another paper requisite, before a patient can be admitted, Mr. Wetherall, which the Institution has found it advisable to demand, in order to protect itself from fraud."

Col. Leeds took out his cambric handkerchief, and wiped the corners of his mouth slowly.

"I thought the law required only the certificate," he said, calmly, replacing the handkerchief in his breast.

But his face was deadly pale.

"The statutory law does not even require the certificate. Common law, or custom, calls for it. But the Institution has suffered so much from fraud of late years, that we have thought it prudent, for the security of justice, to demand previous to the detention of a patient—"

Col. Leeds gave an eager gesture of assent.

"A bond, furnished to the manager, for the payment of his board, and other expenses. This bond must secure such payment for the space of thirteen weeks, and must have the names of two responsible and known indorsers. We do this to protect ourselves."

Col. Leeds drew a long breath, a breath of relief.

"Oh! to protect yourselves?" with a smile, quickly hidden. "The bond shall be furnished in an hour. What are your rates of board?"

The Superintendent named the sum.

"If the patient's friends dislike publicity," he added, "he can have a room and attendant to himself, by the payment of a larger sum. If it is your request, in that case, he need never see the face of a human being, except his keepers."

Leeds and Frederick glanced at each other anxiously.

"Place him apart, for the present, if you please, doctor," said the colonel. "I will consult with my son, and notify you of our wishes when I return with the bond."

"Where is Wortley?" said Fred, as they rose to go, and he walked to the window to look out.

"He has been removed to another room. I will send him to a ward as soon as our business is arranged," said the doctor.

Col. Leeds hesitated, hat in hand; then hurriedly asked, with assumed indifference, "What tests, or examination, do you subject your patients to, on entering, to determine their insanity?"

"None. We rely on the certificate; that is *prima facie* evidence."

"In case of the failure of payment——"

"The patient must be at once removed," was the prompt answer. "Will you look through the Institution, gentlemen, before you go?" and he touched a bell. "You will find here all the evidences of the great advance which science has made in the curing of insanity in later years."

Col. Leeds bowed. "I've no doubt of it, doctor—no doubt of it. We will be happy to inspect the building on our return. But I fear my unfortunate relative may see us now; and he is very violent, against us, his nearest friends——"

"It is too often the case, sir."

"Your cells for violent patients are *safe*?"

"Quite safe. You need not fear his escaping;" and he ushered them to the door:

CHAPTER XIV.

DR. HARTE met the man, who had brought Wortley from the depot, as he crossed the hall. "Where is the patient?" he said.

"In the waiting-room. He's very violent—almost broke from the keepers, handcuffs and all, just now; talks about conspiracy, as they mostly does."

The doctor nodded and entered the waiting-room. He paused an instant, looking at Dick, who, now recovered from the blow that had stunned him, was pacing up and down like a caged tiger.

After measuring his height and muscles thus, the doctor went up and carelessly tapped him on the breast.

"Stop!" he said, fixing his eye on Dick's.

The doctor was a firm believer in the power of one human eye over another. In this case, however, no effect was apparent.

"What house is this?" asked Dick.

"The House Beautiful, many of our friends call it," answered the doctor, employing one of the stereotyped jests with which he "calmed" his patients. He did not smile, however, as he spoke; on the contrary, the narrow, gray eyes still stared inflexibly.

"I do not know who you are, sir," said Dick. "But you appear to be a man of sufficient intelligence to know that the treatment I have met would not be tolerated in the most absolute despotism. That a man should be kidnapped—taken by force through the streets of a crowded city by daylight—— Pardon me, you are not listening to me, sir?"

The doctor finished his whispered directions to the little keeper.

"Ward six, No. 3, as soon as possible," he said, turning to look idly out of the window, without regarding Wortley.

Now Dick had made an effort to hold himself and his grievance off at arm's length, as it were, and to speak of it dispassionately, as though he were a cool spectator. This cool indifference made his blood boil. After a moment's stifling pause, he resumed,

"I am innocent of any crime. I have been taken from my family, leaving them almost penniless. My business will be ruined by my absence. You must know that you are responsible for this."

"Be calm, Mr. Wortley! be calm!" was all the answer the doctor vouchsafed.

"I will hold you to account," said Dick, his anger rising. "No man can be imprisoned without warrant or hearing, without the chance of defending himself by the law."

"I think you are mistaken," with an amused smile. "I have a paper here," touching Molkers' dirty slip, "on the strength of which I could arrest the judge upon the bench, and hold him until I considered him fit to be set free. Ready, Minch? Will you follow this gentleman, Mr. Wortley?" pointing to one of the under-keepers in the door-way.

Dick saw, with one quick glance, a crowd of other men in the hall, stout, brawny Irishmen. What could he do, handcuffed, against them? A cold thrill of actual fear, for the first time in his life, contracted his muscles.

"Are you going to murder me?" he said.

"Gently! gently! Your detention is perfectly legal. You may be assured of that," said the doctor, unctuously.

"Then send for counsel for me. You can refuse that to no man, if he were the vilest felon that lives. Mr. Lloyd," naming an eminent lawyer, "is a friend of my mother's. Send for him."

"Certainly. All in good time. Follow Mr. Minch in the meanwhile. He will remove the handcuffs. I do not wish to use force with you, Mr. Wortley," significantly.

Dick looked back suspiciously. "Will your messenger go at once?"

"In course," said Minch, urging him on with his hand on his collar. "Didn't the doctor say it. Wid ye doubt a gentleman's word?"

How shall we describe Wortley's feelings, when he found himself alone in his cell? His head still pained him, where he had been struck; but this was comparatively nothing. Before the horror of his situation, which he now, at last, fully understood, everything else was forgotten. He had heard of people being imprisoned in lunatic asylums, who were perfectly sane; but he had never believed such stories. Not even when he had read in the newspapers, accounts of trials growing out of these false arrests, had he had more than a half skeptical belief in their truth. There was some mistake, he had been wont, in his charitable way, to say; at least, the parties incarcerated must have been guilty of eccentricities that had deceived their family, or others. But now he realized his error. Great heavens, what was to become of him? Here he was, as sane as man could be, kidnapped by a fraud, and there was no redress! On the contrary, his very anger, the natural result of the deception and imprisonment, was, he now saw, interpreted against him. He had little faith in the doctor's promise to let him

communicate with a lawyer. He remembered, now, that, in all the trials he had read of, it was put in evidence, that letters from the patients of insane asylums were generally suppressed.

"Buried alive! Buried alive!" he cried, at last, starting from the seat, where the keeper had left him, and beginning to pace to and fro, excitedly. "Oh! All-Mighty God!" he said, stretching his arms up to heaven, "look down, and help a miserable prisoner. Give me patience to bear with these men, and intelligence to frustrate them, or I am lost forever—lost, never to be heard of again!"

His supplication calmed him for awhile—when did it not soothe a bruised and breaking heart? But, after a time, his excitement returned. How else could it be? He could not avoid dwelling on his position. He could not help but rack his brains for some plan of escape. Very soon he was pacing his cell again, faster, faster, faster continually, till even the keeper might have been excused for thinking him really insane.

Late that evening, Minch thrust his face into the room where Dr. Harte sat smoking.

"That Wortley's growin' woyolent, sir," he said. "I told him the messenger hadn't gone for his counsel," with a furtive wink, "and, begorra! he demands paper and ink. Shall I give him something to quiet his nerves? I doubt we'll get small sleep in that ward the night."

"No, give him the paper and ink. And, by-the-way, Minch, do not destroy the letters. Bring them to me."

An hour or two after, Dr. Harte lit a fresh cigar, and leisurely broke the seals of Dick's letters to Mr. Lloyd and to his mother.

He read them slowly, shaking his head at them, and then said, "Poor fellow! he seems very mad, indeed!"

With that he threw them both into the fire.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

UNDER COMPULSION.

BY EDGAR FAWCETT.

"Poor Emeline! I am so thoroughly sorry for you!" And kind Mrs. Maberley showed her sympathy in a very warm kiss on the soft cheek of Emeline Maynard. They were seated together in Mrs. Maberley's fine, airy room, on the second-floor of a summer hotel, in front of a window that overlooked the glittering amplitude of Long Island Sound, bathed, just then, in the full fervors of an August noon.

Pretty Mrs. Clara Maberley is a young widow of about thirty-two; and Emeline Maynard is a very charming maiden of eighteen, with whom, since they first became acquainted, scarcely a fortnight ago, Mrs. Maberley professes to have fallen desperately in love.

"I wish that a certain other person was inclined to be as friendly as you are," Emeline said, and her voice trembled tearfully. "Oh, Mrs. Maberley! why is it that uncle Fane opposes my marriage with Leonard? Surely, there must be some other reason than that of his family. Because Leonard Leavitt's father was a self-made man, what possible excuse can uncle Fane find for everlastingly separating us? I used to think that his old habit of talking about 'respectability, respectability,' for hours at a time, was merely a harmless habit, and nothing more. But I have found, to my sorrow, that he can sacrifice the happiness of a human heart to this absurd hobby of his. I wish poor papa was alive. If so, he would never permit uncle Fane, for all he is so rich and powerful, to stand between myself and Leonard Leavitt!"

"Ah, Emeline! it is idle to wish for impossibilities. You say that your uncle is firmly resolved, and that he has told you he desires for you a match more socially respectable than that which would be represented by your union with Leonard Leavitt. Well, as far as I can see, my child, there are two courses open to you. One is—elopement."

"Elopement! Oh, Mrs. Maberley! I never thought that *you* would advise so wicked——"

"I don't advise it, my darling. Believe me, I am very far from advising it. There is another course which, though difficult, is certainly more preferable. I mean persuasion—to prevail upon your uncle to discard his objections, by sheer force of skillful diplomacy."

Emeline's face fell. "If you only knew, Mrs. Maberley, how often I have pleaded and besought uncle Fane, and all to no purpose. He never gets angry. Flying into a temper isn't his style, you know. He doesn't bluster nor fume; he smiles and toys with his watch-chain, and placidly shakes his head. Then, when I have finished my supplication, he generally crosses one leg over the other, and during a prolonged stare at his well-polished boots, tells me in slow, grave tones that my mother was an Abercrombie. With uncle Fane it is a supreme favor on the part of Providence to have had one's mother an Abercrombie. I think that he considers the world's population to be made up of Abercrombies, and a few millions of inferior beings hardly worthy of mention in so august a connection."

"You put his favorite weakness in a very ludicrous manner," laughed Mrs. Maberley; "but I must say, Emeline, that, as far as my experience of your uncle's character goes, it certainly corresponds very truthfully with your description."

After Emeline Maynard left her chamber that morning, Mrs. Maberley sat for a long time quite silent, as though deeply absorbed in thought, the pretty, countless-hued roll of her embroidery lying untouched in her lap. At last she started up with an impulsive air peculiar to her, and throwing the embroidery on a side-table, exclaimed,

"I may as well try it. Everything is fair, they say, in love as in war. There is no better scheme that I can think of at present; and poor Emeline has endured her uncle's cruelty long enough."

She descended the stairs, not long afterward, and passed out on the broad, high-pillared piazza of the hotel. Quite a number of people were assembled there, and to many of these Mrs. Maberley cordially bowed. One gentleman, leaning against a pillar and looking toward the opposite bench with a languid air, Mrs. Maberley observed rather attentively.

She approached him presently, and lightly touched his shoulder. He turned, showing a pale, pinched face, adorned—if we may use the term—by a scanty, gray beard, trimmed and combed, however, with the utmost neatness.

His costume, too, was marked by something which, if not absolutely foppery, bore a decided resemblance to it.

"Charming morning," said Mrs. Maberley, looking seaward.

"Delightful," assented the gentleman, whose voice, by-the-way, seemed to correspond with his appearance, being artificial and peculiar in its sound, and having a certain affected drawl that Mrs. Maberley was by no means fond of hearing. "You are, doubtless, surprised at my lounging attitude, Mrs. Maberley. I confess that to lounge about piazzas is not my usual custom."

"No, Mr. Abercrombie. I was not surprised by your attitude, however."

"And may I ask why not?"

"Because, whatever Mr. Fane Abercrombie chooses to do becomes him," Mrs. Maberley answered, with her pleasantest smile, and an engaging twinkle of her merry eyes, that was by no means lost upon her hearer.

"Oh! thanks, thanks. You are very kind to say so, I am sure." And Mr. Abercrombie coughed behind a delicate handkerchief, cambric, and lavender-scented.

"Yonder is a very cool and inviting spot," suddenly exclaimed Mrs. Maberley, glancing toward an adjacent corner of the piazza. "And see, there are two chairs arranged so nicely together. What a charming *tele-a-tete* you and I might have, provided——"

"Provided" what, Mrs. Maberley."

"I only had my embroidery."

"Have you left it up stairs?"

"Yes."

"In your room?"

"Yes."

"Can't I fetch it for you?"

"It will be too much trouble, I know."

"But I assure you that it will not."

"You are altogether too good," Mrs. Maberley quite gushingly said. "You know my room, Mr. Abercrombie? No. 23, second floor; and the embroidery is lying on a small table near the door. I shall be so much obliged to you. Here is my key."

Mr. Abercrombie bowed, and moved smilingly away. A second after he had left the piazza and entered the house, Mrs. Maberley rapidly followed the direction he had taken. She saw him ascend the stairs, and, at a safe distance, silently pursued him.

He now stood in front of the door of her own chamber, unlocking it. Presently he opened the door and entered. Mrs. Maberley followed rapidly, and herself entered the chamber, just

as Mr. Abercrombie was removing the piece of embroidery from the side-table. She closed the door behind her, and began quietly to look it.

Mr. Fane Abercrombie heard her, quietly as she moved, and turned around in some surprise.

"So you concluded to come yourself, Mrs. Maberley?" he stammered; hardly believing what he saw.

"Y—e—s," drawlingly spoken. "Excuse me a moment, Mr. Abercrombie, while I lock you in."

"Lock me in, madam!"

"Precisely."

Mr. Abercrombie stared with amazed eyes.

"I don't think that I exactly comprehend your meaning," he said.

"Well, then, I will endeavor to make it clear." Mrs. Maberley had locked the door on the inside by this time, and placed the key in her pocket. "I have heard, Mr. Fane Abercrombie," she placidly continued, "that you have a very high opinion of what is called respectability. You are proud of the name you bear, and would consider any publicity attaching to it a decided disgrace. Am I right?"

"You are, unquestionably, madam."

"Any publicity, for instance, like that of being found hidden in a lady's closet."

"Madam!"

"I thought you would get indignant," proceeded Mrs. Maberley, with a laugh. "Such scandals are bad enough, when a man of twenty-five is connected with them. But when one of sixty, or thereabouts——"

"Be good enough to unlock that door, Mrs. Maberley!" exclaimed Mr. Fane Abercrombie, with irate haughtiness. "I do not understand your conduct, though I understand enough of it to see that you are attempting some—some——"

"Practical joke, Mr. Abercrombie! Upon my word, you are right. With the exception, however, that the whole matter is anything but a joke to you. It too closely concerns the happiness of your niece, Emeline Maynard."

"My niece!"

"Yes! Do you know, Mr. Fane Abercrombie, that unless you make me a solemn promise, this morning, every person in this hotel shall know, before evening, that the very respectable personage whom I have the honor of addressing, was found by me hidden in a closet of my chamber?"

"But such a statement, madam, will be, as you know, an atrocious falsehood."

Mrs. Maberley laughed a gay, little, malicious laugh, her eyes sparkling with fun.

"Of course, it will," she answered, coolly. "People will believe otherwise, however, when I vouch for its truth."

"For heaven's sake, madam! inform me why I am to be scandalized in this—this shocking style?"

"Because," and Mrs. Maberley's eyes flashed now scornfully, "because, sir, you have treated your niece, Emeline, in so brutal a manner. There is no objection to Leonard Leavitt for Emeline's husband, save an absurd, tyrannical, snobbish one, which you yourself have raised."

"And you wish me——" stammered poor Mr. Fane Abercrombie, thoroughly aghast.

"I wish you, Mr. Abercrombie, to remove that objection. Unless you do so, I shall open this door, and shriek away your character, through this great hotel, in less than five minutes."

"Shriek away my character!"

"Exactly!" exclaimed Mrs. Maberley. "Extreme cases require extreme remedies. Moreover, I shall give you but a short warning."

The man glared at her as if he would like to knock her down.

She went on coolly,

"Consider, Mr. Fane Abercrombie," she said. "Which is it to be? Your respect-

ability preserved intact, or its utter and irremediable ruin? I am in earnest. I was never more in earnest in all my life. I love Emeline, and have an opportunity of saving her from a great unhappiness. You are in a trap. You had better yield gracefully, acknowledging your defeat. Come, decide quickly. Either swear me a solemn, sacred, binding oath, that you will freely consent to Emeline's marriage with Leonard Leavitt, or else find yourself suddenly converted from the irreproachable Mr. Fane Abercrombie into somebody whose best friends feel privileged to talk against, as having lost caste and respectability."

The victim paused a moment. But there was no escape.

"Madam," he said, at last, "I agree to your terms. I will take the oath you desire."

He spoke coldly and stiffly.

Mrs. Maberley bowed and unlocked the door, without a word.

The next day Mr. Fane Abercrombie himself announced Leonard Leavitt's engagement to Emeline Maynard. The marriage followed soon after. Mrs. Maberley's victory was signal and entire; but Mr. Fane Abercrombie never spoke to her afterward. For this, however, she did not care. She had her revenge, when the happy pair were safely united, by telling the story of his promise made UNDER COMPELSION.

WHAT MISS KILDUFF TOLD.

BY FRANK LEE BENEDICT.

I AM a woman—that doesn't astonish you. I am Irish by descent—my name and my quick temper may have led you to suppose that, and you like me all the better for it; and the latter quality I have mentioned you can sympathize with as well as any man I know.

Over and above all this (I dare say I shall be ungrammatical occasionally, women usually are when they try to tell a long story) I am an old maid. Now you are astonished, not at the fact, but at my acknowledging it cheerfully and boldly.

You want me to tell you something about myself—some of my experiences. By-the-way, that's a ridiculous word, and doesn't mean anything, but it sounds well enough—so let it go.

You think I have had a romance, and you want to hear it. Of course, I know what you'll do—you'll alter my name, and put me in a story, long nose, angular form, and all. You needn't take the trouble to deny it, I shouldn't believe you if you did. You would put your grandmother in a story without hesitation or reverence, and tell your own worst escape unblushingly, if you could make money out of it, or gain the credit of having written a brilliant article.

Bah! I know the whole tribe of you—but I don't care. Light your pipe, take the easy-chair, and imagine me eighteen, for that is where I shall begin.

I was not a handsome girl; I had fine eyes and beautiful hair; I was straight and well made, and I was unusually clever. I was a very proud creature, and though few people suspected it, a very sensitive one, with a great longing to be loved by my relations and friends—and I never thought I got as much affection as I deserved.

I had a sister two years older than myself—she was very pretty, and a wit. I had a sister two years younger—she was a beauty, and a fool. My father adored the elder girl, my mother worshiped the other; and my astute parents agreed in just two things—in underrating me, and hating each other.

Nobody wanted me to be born, though I am sure they need not have blamed me, since I never asked the privilege of being brought into

this tiresome old world; but, somehow, both father and mother seemed to think it was my fault.

You see I made my appearance just at the wrong time, when my parents were fretting most under the yoke that bound them together. My father was very tired of his wife, and my mother was horribly jealous of her husband, and neither of them was prepared to love a child upon which the other had any claim.

By the time my younger sister was born, the keen edge of their mutual anger and rebellion had worn off, and my mother, falling into invalid ways, was sufficiently solitary to open her heart to the new comer, and love her with all the fervor that a weak woman can put into an affection which centers upon one object, and is essentially selfish.

There we were, still rich enough to be comfortable—might have been much more so if my father had not possessed the happiest faculty for spending money, and my mother had been able to carry her marvelous theories of economy into practice.

We lived up the Hudson river, near enough town to have frequent visitors, and go down occasionally for gayeties, and my father staid at home as little as possible—like most men.

I said I was eighteen. Margaret, then twenty, was engaged to a rich man, a good deal older than herself. Lucy was insisting, with all the willfulness of sixteen, on considering herself quite too old to be tied down to lessons and girlish restraints any longer, and gave my mother no peace until she was allowed to take her place as an eligible young lady—I mean eligible for flirtation and matrimony.

So, between the cool assumption of the engaged sister and the charming selfishness of the younger, I came poorly off for my share in the way of dress and money; and as I was too proud to tease, it grew to be an understood thing that I cared nothing for society or amusements.

"Of course, you'll be an old maid," Margaret always said to me; "you were born for that. Never mind, you'll be a good sort of old thing, and if I ever should have children, an old-maid aunt will be just what I shall need to interest herself in them; and you may be

sure father will spend every cent he owns before he leaves this mortal sphere."

And Lucy said,

"Here, Peggy, do alter this dress for me, that's a duck! I am the youngest and the prettiest, and you ought to be willing to help me."

They always called me Peggy, though the nickname ought to have been my elder sister's, for I was baptized Helen.

"I wish you'd study Greek," my father said, as a standing joke; "you've just the nose for it, Peggy."

"It's no use talking, Peggy," sang my mother, "somebody has got to manage the house. Margaret won't, Lucy is not fit, and you know what my health is—so do try and show that you have some natural affection and gratitude in you. And, oh, Peggy! don't look that way—you do so remind me of your father's sister; and if ever I hated mortal woman, it was that old cat."

There's a whole volume in these three speeches. You can understand what my life was just as well as if I took pages to descant upon my troubles. I was not a bit in the situation of a heroine in a novel. Nobody persecuted me—they were all fond of me, after a fashion, only they were not used to considering me of any real importance. I was a superfluity, in fact, and must pay for it.

In a great many families you will see one child that there seems no exact place for—that was my case. I got in the habit of regarding myself in that light; I was an inadvertence, or an accident—and that was all about it.

So I did what I could with my life, of course, in a blind enough sort of way, for there was no one to help me or set me right. I do not mean to lie; I was not an angel of patience, and I had very little predisposition toward martyrdom. Sometimes my temper flamed up, and I went through a process that my father roughly called "playing the deuce;" and they were all glad to stand from under at such seasons; but they punished me for it after by cold looks and sneering words. I always tried to make up for such wickedness by being more attentive to my duties, and more patient, and was half inclined to think it was my own fault that I was not more loved and regarded.

That was Helen Kilduff at eighteen. My birthday came early in the spring, and the summer that followed was the beginning of my romance.

Nobody suspected it, but I was an inveterate dreamer. My every-day life was so bare and

distasteful that I got in the habit of living in a romance; and I think the chief of the tribe of sensation-writers never wove more wonderful plots, and put in more startling incidents than I into my silent novels. I was passionately fond of fiction and poetry. I was, under that cold, shy exterior, the most impulsive, warm-hearted thing; and I had grown so accustomed to living in my ideal world, that I think the most startling event arising to change the tenor of my existence would have appeared to me perfectly natural.

I meant to do wonderful things in those days—write books, paint pictures, go on the stage, be a Sister of Charity, go into a mad-house, die early. Oh! you know the whole rignarole. As we grow out of our youth we laugh at such dreams and fancies—perhaps we might better mourn over the lost power of indulging in such enthusiasm.

It was the loveliest June day imaginable. I had been very busy all the morning in the laundry, for Lucy was going away for a week, and the woman would be careless about her fluted dresses—sewing on Margaret's outfit—writing a letter to my father—helping my mother through a neuralgic headache; and at last I was free, and went out into the late afternoon for a breath of fresh air.

I went off to the woods, up on the hill, and sat there and dreamed my dream, and wondered when the change and the magician would come. It was time to go home all too soon—my father was coming up that night, and would bring a friend with him, and a late dinner, properly served, must be ready.

I could laugh at the jumble of the romantic and the practical. Luckily for me I could see the ludicrous side of things; I started up—ran down the hill—hit my foot against a stump—fell—rolled over—heard a cry of dismay—opened my eyes, and found myself in the arms of a young man. Yes, indeed! and as handsome a young man as ever helped a young woman out of a scrape in any novel.

"Are you hurt?" demanded he.

"I think not," said I, and tried to stand, and could not, and tried to laugh, and felt myself grow sick and pale, and knew that I had sprained my ankle. There's an incident at last—as I am not a heroine you must excuse its lack of originality.

"You are hurt?" said he.

"Yes," said I.

"What can I do? There's a house down there——"

"It's my father's, and I want to go there,"

I interrupted, and longed to scream, but did not.

"Where are you hurt?" I believe he asked next.

"I've sprained my ankle, I'm afraid," I said, as quietly as I could; and then he looked very helpless, naturally, being a man.

To cut the matter short, he helped me home; and when we reached the veranda, there stood my father and his friend, and Margaret's betrothed, all just arrived, and Margaret herself.

I took that opportunity to faint away for the first, and almost the last time in my life; so I can't tell you how the handsome man made his explanations.

When I came to myself I was lying on a sofa in the sitting-room. Margaret was standing by me, with a camphor-bottle in her hand, and a disgusted expression on her face. One of the maids was unlacing my boot, and hurting me so dreadfully that I screamed, and my father looming near.

"She's better," said he. "When a woman can scream, she's all right. I've sent for the doctor, Peg; you'd better get to bed. A fine dinner we shall get—women never do have any consideration."

"I never knew such a girl," grumbled Margaret. "Oh, dear! To go tumbling down hills like a great boy! I'm very sorry about your ankle; but don't scream, it makes me faint! And I'm so sick with this camphor. Mary can help you up stairs. Do just see this bracelet Mr. Forsyth has brought me."

Off she went, and I went to bed; and the doctor came, and I had not really sprained my ankle. So the next day I could limp down stairs; but I was only fit to lie on the sofa; and there was nobody to mind me, for Margaret was busy with Mr. Forsyth, and Lucy was packing. They were all very sorry for me; but they all felt that it was inconsiderate of me to have met with an accident at such a time.

"How could you do it, Peggy!" expostulated my mother. "To go rolling about and falling over a strange young man."

I felt that it was indiscreet, and was tolerably meek about it. Lucy started on her visit that morning; and in the course of the day up came my handsome young man to inquire after me.

His name was Walter Rodney. He was an artist, and he knew my father slightly; and father introduced him to me, and went off to play billiards with old Mr. Edwards, and Walter Rodney sat a long time with me, and—

I didn't hesitate from modesty or effect. Talking about it all makes it seem so recent and fresh, that I was near crying a little, though I am thirty-five.

This was just it! He looked straight into my soul with those beautiful eyes; he talked to me, and in his words, the very sound of his voice, my soul recognized a new but perfectly familiar language, a voice that appealed to something deep within my heart, and my whole being cried out in answer.

That may be nonsensical, but it is true! I went straight off into dream-land, and I say, thank God! That love has brought me all the real trouble of my life. I have endured through it every form of suffering, pain, separation—worst of all, suspense; but I say, thank God that I have known it! I shall say it with my last breath here. I believe it will be the first hymn of gratitude my soul shall utter in the hereafter.

He sat with me for a long time. I think we talked from the first like old acquaintances. I caught a glimpse of his choicest dreams and hopes, and understood and sympathized with them, and he knew that I did so.

I am rather a plain old maid, with a long nose; but I believe that each soul sent into this world has its rightful mate, if only it can find it—and I had met mine; that means more than anything else I could tell you if I talked for an hour.

He was gone. I heard him laughing with my father in the hall; heard him invited back—urged to come frequently. Then his step went out through the vestibule, and my soul followed him.

The next thing was father and Mr. Edwards talking, and it was about him.

"He's a wonderfully agreeable young fellow," said the old bachelor; "but you know his reputation?"

"Oh, I know!" answered my father, carelessly. "He's half Society-man, half Bohemian—awfully fast, and all that; but he's very amusing, and as he'll only be here a fortnight, we may as well have the fun of his society. Margaret is disposed of, Lucy is gone; and he's not likely to look at Peg's big nose—let him come."

Mr. Edwards said something I did not catch, but my father replied,

"Nonsense! Peggy is too busy with her books and her housekeeping to think about flirtation—don't believe she even knows the meaning of the word! The best girl in the world, but a born old maid. Bless you, he'd

never think twice about her, and she'd only be bored and frightened if he did."

After awhile I got up and limped to the glass. Was I so plain? This new revelation had made its impress on my face already—I could see it. I was not handsome, like my sisters; but it was not the dull, cold face my father thought it. For the first time I knew that I had magnificent hair—it's just as lovely still. For the first time I felt that the eyes that looked at me out of the glass were much better worth possessing than a pretty woman's prettiness. Then I got away from the mirror, a little startled at the strange look that had flashed into them.

I did not tell myself that I loved this man. I did not know it. I was a woman; but I went away up into my heaven, and the glory of his face followed me, and the music of his voice thrilled my soul with a melody that has never left me solitary since.

Two weeks went by—two whole weeks; so brief a space, and yet they held a whole eternity. I have been away down into the depths since then. Oh! I have suffered, even if I do say it quietly; but in the very bitterest paroxysm of my agony, yes, in the hours when man and heaven seemed most cruel, I was never wicked enough to deny that I had had a great happiness given to me.

If all coming time should be a blank to me, I was always ready to own that my life had not been wasted. I had loved and been beloved—I had been happy. Other people spread their happiness thin to make it poorly cover a life; I had mine in one glorious avalanche—I never denied that.

Two weeks, and before they were gone, he told me that he loved me—told me the whole story of his life, his errors, his failures, his sins; and I, a woman, loved him all the better because I could pity him.

He was very young, too—only twenty-three; so ambitious, so noble, with his boyish follies falling away from him, and the real nature developing itself and longing to grow toward the light. A genius—you know what a reputation he has made since. Warm-hearted and loving—as a woman, generous and wayward as a man; hot-headed, passionate, bad-tempered, illy brought up; familiar with life in all its phases—his own master for years. The only wonder was that he was not worse. Proof enough, except to the willfully blind, how fine his nature was from the fact that, after all he had gone through, he could still love goodness, and long to turn toward the light and the truth.

Lucy came back. For two days she tried her powers of flirtation on him, and he treated her as if she had been a pretty doll. Then she turned about and detested him with all the venom of a weak character; but, though a fool, she was a woman, and, therefore, certain there was a cause for his conduct, and quick to find it out.

There is no meanness of which a mean woman is not capable, from listening at doors to opening letters. Lucy did both, and when she knew the whole truth, she went straight to my father.

He flew into one of his horrible tempers. My mother wrung her hands, and lamented over me as if I had disgraced the family, and she had always expected it; and Lucy, uncomfortable at the storm she had raised, took refuge in the conviction that it had been her duty, and so was able to be properly virtuous and severe.

"A miserable, penniless scamp," cried my father. "Over head and ears in debt! And only yesterday Edwards told me he wanted to marry you himself."

This was after a great deal of talk and repetition, on his part, that the real secret of his anger came out. He had always expected me to be an old maid, and was proportionately delighted when he learned the honor Mr. Edwards intended me.

"And he is coming up to-morrow," said he; "and here you are fancying yourself in love with that scapegrace."

"That I should live to bear it!" moaned my mother. "Twenty thousand a year, at least, thrown away."

"Thrown away?" repeated my father, turning on her. "I have known for years that you were an utter idiot, madam; but you needn't think I am! The girl shall marry Mr. Edwards, if I drag her into the church."

By that time, between despair and rage, I was desperate, and his own defiant spirit was fully roused in me.

"I will never marry him!" I exclaimed; "never! You may separate me from the man I love—you may kill me; but you shall never force me to that."

More sneers, more threats from him; and at last I poured out the bitterness and grief of my whole life.

"You never cared for me," I said; "you never treated me as your child! I have been neglected, scorned all my life; and now you come with this new outrage."

It is of no use to go over that dreadful scene.

I know how wicked I was—God forgive me and them!

And in the midst of it Lucy, from the window, called out that Rodney was coming up the path. My father turned both the women out of the room; admitted Rodney himself, and then burst out on him: He called him very vile names; he brought up every story against him—every idle report; and for my sake that man bore it.

"I do not deny that I have been reckless and wild," he said; "but I love her! Look at her—she loves me! Don't take from us our one hope of happiness! We will wait—we will be patient; but for God's sake be merciful!"

Merciful! Is any man in this century capable of being so where money is concerned?

The end came at last.

"Leave my house!" my father ordered. "You shall never have her! You have defied me. Let me see if she dares go to you with my curse on her head."

"Helen!" Walter called.

I went straight to his side. If there had been a gulf of fire between me and him, I should have gone through it when his soul called out to me in a tone like that.

My father tried to force me away with mad oaths.

"Let her alone," cried Walter Rodney; "it is the last time I shall speak to her. I do not know if she would consent, but I would not take her from you—have your way. Only this, Helen, believe that I have loved you, that I have told you the truth! Whatever comes—whatever stories they tell, believe that."

"I will!" I answered. "And now hear me, father—listen! This man is going away forever—I love him! I swear before heaven that I will be as true to him as if I were his wife! You may separate us here; but I will live with the one hope of meeting him in heaven; and as heaven hears me, it knows I shall not fail."

He held me in his arms—I felt his kisses rain down on cheek and lips. I heard my father's voice in wilder passion; then Walter Rodney was gone. I neither fainted or went mad—people have to live when such suffering comes.

The summer passed. Margaret was married; Lucy was sent off to amuse herself under the care of a friend. I lived and bore my burden.

For a whole year I was persecuted to marry Mr. Edwards. He gave up at last, for I appealed to him in my father's presence to leave me alone, if he had either manly decency, or human feeling.

My father did not kill me—that is all I can say.

On through the years! I was twenty-one; Lucy married; my mother died; my father and I were alone in the old house. He never softened—never forgave me during all those years. I don't think I exaggerate when I say that, after the time when he ceased to be violent and abuse me, he did not speak to me from one twelvemonth to another, except when it was absolutely necessary.

He had never been a good man. He lived until I was twenty-three; then he died from the effects of a fall from a horse.

He was sick for a fortnight. My sisters came home once during the time for a day each. I took care of him; and at the last I think he knew he was dying, and I think he tried to speak to me, and to say there was no harsh feeling left in his heart, but the words were only broken and indistinct.

"Where I was wrong, father," I said, "forgive me. Where you were wrong, I forgive, too; and I think heaven will pardon us both."

He smiled. From that hour he grew more tranquil, and died very quietly at last, holding my hand in his.

There was very little left—even the old house had to go to settle his debts. But I was spared poverty and dependence—a moderate fortune was left me by a relative.

Since we parted, no communication had passed between Walter Rodney and myself. He had been in Europe—in the East; had painted good pictures; was winning a name—the public journals told me that.

Two months after my father's death he came to America; heard that I was alone, and came straight to find me. I was still in the old house. Lucy was with me; she had just learned of my having a fortune left, and had come to visit me. She was very angry because I would not save the homestead. I did not want the place, and her husband refused to purchase it as she wished. She wanted me to buy it and settle it on her son.

Walter Rodney came. In this world the most tragic events of our lives are usually linked with some incident that is either pultry or ludicrous. I was in my bath-room—in the bath. One of the women came to the door and knocked, and said it was a gentleman's card—he wished to see me instantly.

I told her to push it under the door; reached out my arm and got the card—it was his.

"Say I will dress and come down," I cried; too wild to know what I said.

It seemed to me as if I consumed ages in dressing. I could not get my clothes on—I could not arrange my hair. The more I tried to hasten, the slower my icy fingers moved. When I was nearly ready, I upset a pitcher of water over myself. I bruised my hand; I met with every drawback that was conceivable.

I think I must have been nearly an hour getting myself into a state so that it was possible for me to go down stairs. I rushed into my sitting-room—Lucy sat there.

"Where is Walter?" I shrieked.

"Gone," she said. "I did not know he was here. I came in, and he burst out on me, saying that he had loved you all these years; had come to you, and you could send him word you had gone to dress; you could keep him waiting after all this time to adorn yourself."

"What did you say?" I asked.

"What could I say? I thought it was better he should go—a beggarly painter; and you know Mr. Pierrepont wants to marry you."

I sent after him. He had gone—no trace. I wrote to New York to a friend of his—no answer. I waited three days; I was a woman, and could do no more. The third morning Lucy read aloud from a paper that Walter Rodney had sailed for Europe, on his way to the East.

I gave way, then. I was suffering from a violent cold—a fever followed. I was confined to my bed for weeks, so ill and shattered that, cold weather having set in, the doctor ordered me not to leave the house. Lucy had left me, afraid that the fever was contagious. I lived through that winter. I cannot tell you how—but I lived.

When spring came, I sailed for Europe. I could not stop to think whether it was unwomanly. I must see him—must tell him the truth. My letter inclosed to his artist friend had been returned long since; the gentleman did not know Mr. Rodney's address.

I went to Paris—no trace; to Switzerland, when the warm weather came. I was stopping at Vevay; wondering where I should go next, unable through any channel to hear of him.

One moonlight evening I wandered down to the lake, and there I came face to face with Walter Rodney. He was standing with his arms folded in an attitude I knew so well, looking out across the golden waters. I knew him in an instant—my soul would have recognized him if a million years had passed.

"Walter!" I called. "Walter!"

He turned and saw me—he knew me, too. There he stood—speechless—white.

"Walter," I cried, "I was true—I was faithful!"

It was not a romantic story. I told it—I waited for him to speak—to forgive me. Oh, my God! my God! He lifted up his white face, and no lost soul in purgatory ever raised one more hopeless and despairing.

"Heaven have mercy on me!" he groaned. "Helen—I am married!"

There we met and parted. It was very brief—very quiet. He told me all that Lucy had said—I was inclined to marry Mr. Pierrepont—he had better go away. He could see for himself that I had no good news for him; that I shrunk from the meeting, since I could keep him waiting on so frivolous a pretext.

We met there and parted. He held my hand in his. I was the stronger, then. I tried to remind him of the life beyond—of the hope of meeting there; but he could only feel the agony of the living death of that hour.

"Never to meet in this world?" he repeated. "And my madness has done it!"

I could not bear that, it was too much.

"Tell me the hardness will pass," I said, "or I shall go mad. Walter, promise me to live—to make your life all that it was meant to be."

Oh! I don't know what I said; but I could weep at last—those blessed tears that kept my tottering reason from going completely out.

Then I heard his voice. I think if a dead man could speak, the tones would sound as his did in my ear.

"I can't weep!" he said. "I can't find a tear! I will do all that you wish, I promise that."

He groped about blindly, staggering like a man just recovering from the effects of some physical blow.

"Give me your hand, Helen," he said, "a moment—we will part then."

I crept to his side, and laid my hands in his. He did not offer to kiss me; he did not speak one tender word, such as was forbidden then.

There we stood in silence, looking up into the night—into the cloudless heaven that looked so far away.

"Helen," he said, suddenly, "do you remember the day we walked in the woods for the first time, and the wild honeysuckles I gathered and wove in your hair?"

I had been back, too; for the moment, with each, the actual had been swept aside—we had been back in the glory of that first dream. I believe some angel mercifully sent it, to give us strength.

It was all over. He clasped my hands a little closer, looked once more in my face, and said,

"Go your way, now, and let me go mine."

We neither said farewell. Once again he pronounced my name—

"Helen!"

The old, old voice, with the old tenderness ringing through it; then, before the mists cleared from my eyes, he was gone—and I stood there alone in the silence of the night.

I was twenty-three years old then—I am thirty-five now. Oh! you poor weaver of the imaginary sorrows of imaginary beings, try and realize it—those years—those years!

I think I have been neither wicked or weak. I think I have had faith in God throughout—and to you, the end!

Two weeks ago I was sitting in this very

room, when the door opened, and, without warning, Walter Rodney stood before me. I had known that he would come. Months and months before I had learned the tidings of his wife's death. There was no sign from him. When it was right for him to come, he came.

Hark! Did you hear the bell—now, then, a step? That is his! See! here he comes—my handsome Walter still!

Stand by me, Walter! Let him look at us! I have told him our story—yours and mine. There is only this left, when two weeks more are gone, I shall be Walter's wife.

Oh, friend! look up through the gloom, and remember I had an object in telling you this. Let it teach you that, however dark the night is, with faith in God, you shall live the darkness out, and see the blessed daylight break at last, as we have—my Walter and I.

MISS PEACHY PEAY.

BY FRANCES LEE.

THE usual annual check had come from cousin Wanamaker, and Mrs. Caldwell and her daughters were discussing where they should go for the summer. Mrs. Caldwell was a widow, with but a small income, and Mr. Wanamaker was a millionaire.

Mr. Wanamaker, himself, though a widower, was still in the prime of life, and eminently handsome; and Mrs. Caldwell, perhaps, would have preferred his hand to his check; but she knew this was a hopeless wish.

"So kind of cousin George," she said. "And now, girls, where shall we go? I am tired of Saratoga and Long Island. What do you think of a quiet country retreat somewhere?"

To a quiet country retreat, after some discussion, it was resolved to go. The place selected was a farm, up among the hills, belonging to a well-to-do farmer, known as grandfather Tole. Aunt Phoebe, grandfather Tole's sister, had rather opposed the taking of boarders, as she opposed everything that was novel; but Chloe, the eldest of the granddaughters, who was the family Jupiter, had spoken up promptly. "Why not?" she said. "It will stir us up, and give Maggie some idea of great folks, for I am told these Caldwells are very fashionable. Let us have them by all means." Maggie was Chloe's younger sister, and the pet and beauty of the family; and when she too pronounced in favor of the scheme, the thing was settled. So the Caldwells came—mother and daughters.

"They're not stuck up a bit, if they did come from down below," said aunt Phoebe, when tea was over. "Appear just like our sort of folks."

The Caldwells were equally pleased. "Let's stay here always," said Mabel, the younger daughter, to her mother, "it is so beautiful in the country. I hate the city."

It really was very pleasant at the old farmhouse, those early summer days. There was such a tender green on field and tree; such blossom and scent; such sparkling mountain streams; such wonderful moonlight. The Tole family, too, were so pleasant. Maggie was the life of the house. She was so full of fun and was so obliging. "So cultivated, too," said Mabel, who had fancied that farmer's daughters must be ignorant. "Why, she has read more books than I have, ma!"

But as the summer advanced, and the days grew hotter, and things lost their novelty, the fickle Mabel began to be less enthusiastic about the country.

"Always the same milk and fruit, always the same drive," she said. "And Maggie has so much to do now that she can't be with me like she used to. I'd rather a thousand times be in town. It is so dreadfully stupid here, with not so much as a donkey-cart going by. The mosquitoes are ever so much worse than at home. There we have bars, and then there are more people, so they needn't bite just us all the time. And the flies are awful."

In the midst of her grumble, there came a smart rap on the door, that was directly pushed open by a little, old woman, who dropped a brisk, little curtsy on the threshold, and then stepped in. She was dressed in an old-fashioned "short-gown and petticoat," and wore on her head a huge, green silk affair, fashionable thirty years ago under the name of "calash," and bearing close resemblance to a chaise top. Away in under this monstrous bonnet was the wide frill of a white muslin cap; and a pair of covered iron-bowed glasses covering a pair of twinkling black eyes. The old woman carried on her arm a covered basket, and in her hand a great bouquet of field-lilies, jewel-weed, golden-rod, and clematis.

"Miss Peay, Miss Peachy Peay," said she, dropping another curtsy, "I called to fetch you a handful of my sopsavine apples. My tree is early, and I thought mebbly you hadn't had a taste of apples yet this year. And here is a parcel of blows I picked as I was a-coming. Mebbly you will like them, too. They are considerable pretty."

As she spoke, Miss Peay opened her basket and took out a dozen smooth, red apples, fragrant and fair.

"Oh, how nice! Thank you ever and ever so much!" cried the Caldwells, in a heartfelt way. "Do stop and sit with us awhile."

"Yes, I was a meaning to," returned Miss Peay. "I live over to the Cross-Roads, a good bit from here; but I rode in with my brother Philip as far as the turn of the road. He brought his grist over to the mill here, for he thinks Cooley grinds better than the man does at our place. And he had one or two arrants

to the store; so I don't need to be back to the turn under half an hour or such a matter."

"And you live with your brother?" asked Mrs. Caldwell.

"Oh, yes! Him and me, we never, no'er a one of us, merried, and we've always lived together. We was twins; but we aren't any alike. You would not think we was anything to each other."

"Is it a farm like this where you live?" asked Mabel, forgetting her discontent at once.

"Something like," returned Miss Peay. "My brother, he carries on the out-door work, and I keep house for him."

"Do you do all the work your own self—every bit?" asked Mabel, in a tone of pity and wonder.

"La, yes, Miss! I hope so; and have a good bit of time left for my knitting. I knit twenty-five pairs of striped mittens, and twenty-five pairs of feeting last winter. Mr. Call, to the brick store, takes them, and pays one half the money, and one half the goods."

"Feeting? What are feeting?" asked Mabel.

"Feeting! Why don't you know? Men's socks, or stockings, or whatever you call them. I finished off a pair this morning."

"Oh, mother!" exclaimed Mabel, "can't I got a pair of Miss Peay's feeting and send to Mr. Wanamaker?"

Mrs. Caldwell smiled; and the quick, black eyes under the calash caught the smile and the thought behind it.

"Tien't likely," said she, "my homespun, blue yarn would be suitable for a city gentleman; but I would send him a taste of my sop-sovines in welcome, if there was a chance."

"Oh, yes!" cried Mabel, "do send him some apples! We are just sending a box of ferns and mosses for his aquarium, and there is plenty of room."

"Send them, to be sure," answered Miss Peay, opening her basket again; and as though it had been the widow's barrel that never lacked its handful, producing another dozen of smooth, red apples, fragrant and fair.

Miss Peachy Peay went away presently with another brisk, little curtsy. But the effect of her visit lasted longer. It even outlasted the apples. Mabel's good-nature and content continued all day, as she occupied herself filling a letter to Mr. Wanamaker, with a picturesque and enthusiastic account of the visitor.

But that was not the last of the visitor. She came again upon another day, when Mabel was in the midst of another fit of dissatisfaction.

This time Miss Peay brought some early

blackberries, and a great handful of water-lilies; and she came in a dress still odder and older-fashioned, with the same little dipping curtsy, and the same quaint cheerfulness of manner.

"Mr. Wanamaker was ever and ever so much obliged for those apples, Miss Peay," cried Mabel; "and he says if you are as nice as your apples, he wishes we would take you home with us. Will you go, Miss Peay? Now please, do!"

"Home with you!" exclaimed Miss Peay, her black eyes shining with mirth. "A plain, country body like me would make a pretty figure in the city! And I should be worried to death by all the noise and sun. Somebody a-going by in the road pretty much continually, I expect; and a fire likely enough somewhere about, a'most every day. But I thank him, and you, too, for the invite."

"Oh, Miss Peachy, you must go! Mr. Wanamaker wants to see you awfully. He truly does," persisted the inconsiderate child.

Miss Peachy laughed heartily; but before she had time to do more, the village coach drove up before the door, and Mr. Wanamaker himself got out.

At that sight Mrs. Caldwell rushed eagerly upon the piazza, followed by all the children; and Miss Peay was left alone in the room, with no way of escape but through the little, square entry, where Mr. Wanamaker stood paying the driver, and shaking hands with the Caldwells.

She had no idea of meeting him, though, and so she darted across the room to seek an exit through the window. But her dress caught on an ugly nail that Mabel had driven in the case—ment to hang balls of fustian down upon.

"I am awful glad you've come. I do love you so!" she heard Mabel say; and then the party began to move toward the room.

Miss Peachy Peay, at this, made another effort to escape; but the nail held firmly to the stout obituary gown that couldn't tear, for, alas! it was not woven in our degenerate looms.

"Miss Peachy Peay is here this minute, Mr. Wanamaker, and so you can see her," confessed Mabel, with a lip that she put on, like a state dress upon state occasions.

Miss Peachy Peay at this struggled still more fiercely; but still nail and chintz refused to part company. And it was this astonishing tableau that presented itself to Mr. Wanamaker's eyes as he entered the room.

"Permit me, madam," said he, coming forward politely.

At that instant the gathers of the gown gave

way, and at the same time the green calash and iron-bowed glasses fell off; and down floated a mass of fair hair, and up looked a sweet, girlish face in a pretty flush of girlish shame.

Mr. Wanamaker had only an instant look, for as soon as she felt herself released, Miss Peachy Peay disappeared around the corner of the house, never to return.

"Oh, mamma! what a trick has been played on us," cried Mabel. "Did you know it was Maggie all the time? I didn't dream it."

Mamma smiled, with wise superiority.

"Country life gets dull sometimes, and we have to amuse ourselves with all sorts of travesties," said she, in a side apology to Mr. Wanamaker.

As to poor Maggie, she would gladly have hidden her diminished head during Mr. Wanamaker's stay; but that was not possible. The servant, who was to have been such a family relief, never came, and Maggie was both chambermaid and table-waiter. But when she appeared that night with his cup of tea, Mr. Wanamaker gave no sign of recognition; so by degrees the hot color burnt itself out on her cheeks, and she quite recovered her tranquillity. Nevertheless, he noted every look, and word, and gesture, though so quietly that even Mrs. Caldwell's observant eyes did not see it.

So that, for once in her life, she was taken unawares when, at the end of two weeks, Mr. Wanamaker led her to the arbor at the foot of the garden for the sake of asking her advice, as he said, and began to ask it by announcing his intention of adopting Maggie Tole as his daughter.

"My advice!" thought Mrs. Caldwell, curling her lip a little. "He is past advice, and a good way past it. I have seen for two days which way the robin was going to fly."

But outwardly she was sweeter than honey, and smoother than oil.

"How nice!" said she, heartily; yet, as a woman would have perceived, with an under-

tone of disapprobation: "A capital idea," she continued, after a reflective pause, "only—I doubt if her grandfather would part with her. And then, she is rather old for adoption—twenty-two at least, I fancy."

"Twenty-two!" repeated Mr. Wanamaker, aghast.

To be sure! What had he been thinking of. Whatever it was he evidently thought of it no more; for, though he staid another two weeks, he never spoke of adopting a daughter.

Neither did he at Christmas, when he came to Cranberry, to see how the country looked in its robes of transfiguration, white and glistening. Nor in the early spring-time, when he came for no reason at all, that aunt Phoebe could discover.

"Unless to see about getting board for next summer; and I should 'most thought he'd a wrote for that, and not be to the cost of a journey down here," said she. "Look here! I wouldn't go in the parlor—there's folks there; that New York gentleman, Mr. Wagonmaker. Likely he wants to see your pa on some business or other," she added, as Maggie came down the stairs, looking as fresh and fair as a daisy.

She went right on, however, in spite of aunt Phoebe's warning, and as soon as she opened the parlor-door Mr. Wanamaker came forward and, bless you! took her in his arms, and kissed her.

"I want to know—" ejaculated aunt Phoebe, opening her eyes.

She did know, and soon, for though Mr. Wanamaker still said nothing about adopting a daughter, Maggie Tole before the water-lilies were in bloom, went to live with him in his beautiful home in the city.

And when she went, packed away in the choicest corner of her trunks, among white satin, and lace, and muslin, and orange-flowers, was a green calash.

"In memory," said the happy bridegroom, "of Miss Peachy Peay, who introduced to me my wife."

THE UNCONSCIOUS CONFESSION.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CONFESSION," ETC., ETC.

"Hurry up, gentlemen! the coach is waiting," cried the voice of the stage-driver, in front of the Metropolitan Hotel, at Long Branch.

My story goes back to the days when railroads to the Branch were as yet unknown, and when the transit to New York was achieved by coaches that ran toward Sandy Hook, where a steamer awaited the passengers.

A tall, handsome young man, at the summons, came down the stair-case, two steps at a time, and almost ran over a matronly woman, a few years his senior, who was crossing the hall.

"What? Going to leave us?" said the lady, in some surprise, and with more meaning in her look than in her words even.

"Yes! It's no use," was the reply. "Thanks for your good wishes, which I can see in your looks, Mrs. Maxwell. But I'm tired of playing the fool."

"Pshaw!" said the lady, putting her arm familiarly into his, and leading him into the drawing-room, which, at that hour, was deserted. "Faint heart never won fair lady, Mr. Hastings. Listen to me. The coach will wait a moment."

"It's not a question of faint heart," answered the gentleman. "But Kate won't have me. See here, Mrs. Maxwell—it's hardly fair of you to corner one—but she refused me, point-blank, last night."

"And what if she did? I refused Mr. Maxwell the first time myself. It's a way some of our sex have. Come, stay, and try again."

"I'm a proud man," was the reply, "and don't like being trifled with. But I'd stay, if I thought it would do any good. But it won't. She isn't anywhere about, you see, though I told her I would go away to-day. When I said it, she actually laughed. And yet, confound her, I can't help loving her."

Mrs. Maxwell would have liked to have

laughed also. But she knew better than to do it just yet.

"She was a little hysterical, or she wouldn't have laughed," she said. "The truth is, Herbert, you are a pair of fools. You are proud, as you say, and don't brook refusals. Kate is, perhaps, a bit of a flirt, but I sincerely believe she loves you. All she needs is a little more urging. You must storm the fortress till it surrenders. Give her no quarter, that is my advice;" and now Mrs. Maxwell, seeing his face brighten, ventured a laugh.

It was a clear, musical laugh, and it cheered Herbert still more. He hesitated. If another five minutes could have been granted to Mrs. Maxwell, she would have prevailed. But, at this moment, a voice cried,

"Here he is. Hurry up, Hastings. We've been looking for you everywhere. The stage-driver says he won't wait another moment. Ah! Mrs. Maxwell. Our holiday is over, you see. Good-by."

That interruption decided Herbert. He shook his head in reply to Mrs. Maxwell's entreating look, wrung her hand, and dashed out of the drawing-room. The next minute the crowded coach was rolling heavily through the sand, with the surf thundering on its right.

It was six miles, or so, to the steamboat-landing. For the first two miles the passengers, all of whom were gentlemen, chatted gayly; but after that they gradually grew silent, the monotonous drag of the wheels in the sand acting as a sort of soporific. One or two, in fact, fell asleep. And now Herbert began half to repent of what he had done. "Perhaps I have been too hasty," he said, to himself. "What if Mrs. Maxwell is right?"

He mused thus for quite half a mile. "I've a great mind to go back," he thought. "Hold on, driver," he cried, aloud, "I've changed my mind. Stop till I jump out. I'll walk back."

Before his sleepy companions could ask what he meant, he had left the coach, had lit a segar, and was plodding through the heavy sands on his return.

His mood soon changed again. "What a precious fool I am making of myself," he reflected, and he turned to hail the coach, but it was a quarter of a mile off.

He stopped still. "If that fish-hawk dives before I count fifty," he said, "I'll go back to the Metropolitan: if not, I'll walk to the landing and take the afternoon boat."

The fish-hawk dove almost immediately. "Fate has decided for me," he said, desperately. "Now let us see how wisely."

Meantime, where was the offending Kate? To do her justice, she was not aware how much she loved Hastings until she had refused him. It was not altogether coquetry that led her to say, "no." The answer had been given in the first surprise and embarrassment of the proposal. She was frightened to find, almost immediately, how much she had misunderstood herself. She grew more and more embarrassed in consequence; and her manner, afterward, at which Hastings took such offence, was, as Mrs. Maxwell had suggested, really the result of nervousness. Even before he left her she bitterly repented what she had said. Had he persevered a little longer, she would have confessed the truth. She did not, however, believe he would leave the Branch, even after he had said so. Hence, early in the morning, she had started for a long walk on the beach, hoping to meet him there, as usual; for hardly a day had passed, within the last fortnight, that these two had not so met.

There was an old wreck, at that time, about a mile, or more, above the Metropolitan, which had been a favorite haunt of theirs, and thither she repaired. She tried to read till Herbert should appear, but her thoughts wandered from her book continually. Meantime, the hours passed without Herbert appearing. Her heart began to fail her. She spent the time examining her real feelings, and the more she scrutinized them, the more she felt her love had gone from her forever. By-and-by the hot tears began to come. She knew how proud Hastings was, and she said to herself he would never come back.

The sea rolled heavily in; the fish-hawk sailed overhead; the breeze blew fresh from the eastward; the sun shone dazzlingly bright. It was getting toward noon. She gave up all hope, at last, and rising, began to walk back toward the hotel. But, after awhile, she sat

down again, on a boulder, under shelter of the bank, for she had been, all this time, upon the beach below it. She would not yet abandon the chance of seeing him. Gradually she fell into a sort of reverie, and began, half unconsciously, to trace Herbert's name in the sand with the point of her parasol.

It was at this juncture that Herbert, walking along the top of the bank above, discerned her. He had already passed her, and would not have seen her at all, but that his attention was suddenly directed to a fish-hawk, that, diving for a victim, had gone sailing off, northward, with its prey. His heart began to beat fast. Here was the chance he had wished, yet not dared to hope for: it surely was a favorable sign that she had gone to their usual rendezvous. He hastily sprang down the bank and began hurriedly to retrace his steps toward her.

He thought she would hear him as he approached. But she did not. She was evidently too absorbed: in what, however, he could not yet discover. He came nearer and nearer. What with the roar of the surf, and her own absorption, Kate still remained unconscious of his presence. He approached so close, at last, that he could look over her shoulder. Blessed vision! Could he believe his own eyes? She was writing, with her parasol, in the sand, the word,

HERBERT.

His first impulse was to snatch her to his arms. He was loved then? Mrs. Maxwell had been right.

But he restrained himself, waiting, with bated breath, to see what she would do next.

She did nothing for a moment. Then she sighed, and went on tracing, slowly, other words. They were

HERBERT. I LOVE YOU.

Hastings could control himself no longer. His segar had long been out, though retained mechanically: he now flung it away, and stooping over, caught Kate's face in his hands, and kissed her full on her ripe lips.

She sprang up, with a half scream, and turned to face him, angrily, for she did not realize, for a moment, who it was. But when she recognized her lover, she blushed over throat, cheek, and brow even, and covering her face with both her hands, would have run away, if Herbert had not been too quick for her.

"Darling," he whispered, clasping her in his arms, and drawing her to him, "God bless you for those words! I had come to try my

fate once more. Say that dear confession over again."

Kate was silent for awhile. But his caresses soon dried her tears, and made her forget her momentary shame.

By-and-by she looked up saucily and answered,

"Well, listeners, they say, never heard good of themselves, and if I'm such a flirt, as Mrs. Maxwell tells me I am, you haven't much of a bargain. There, will that do?"

"Then you do love me?" insisted Herbert, eager to hear, in her own sweet accents, the acknowledgment.

Kate's eyes were now full of mischief.

"What is written on sand, you know, is the simile for a woman's fickleness."

But, even as she spoke, her sparkling eyes lost their saucy look, and gazed at him with such love, that Herbert took her in his arms again and kissed her rapturously; and I am afraid, if the truth must be told, that Kate, after awhile, kissed him in return.

What a happy hour it was that followed! The lovers paced up and down the strand, far out of sight of any intruders, exchanging confessions as to when they first began to be interested in each other. Ah! that first hour of mutually acknowledged affection. Is there anything in life, over after, half, or quarter, so blissful?

Mrs. Maxwell happened to be standing in the piazza of the hotel, as Hastings and Kate

returned, toward dinner-time, arm-in-arm. She understood all at a glance, but she could not forbear a little raillery.

"Ah! you're back again, Mr. Hastings," she said. "I thought you'd such imperative business in New York, that, if you didn't get there to-day, the world would come to an end. And you, Kate, my dear; you said you had a dreadful headache. Will walking in the sun cure it, child? Bless me, how red your cheeks are! Really, you must use some glycerine. Do you know what glycerine is, Mr. Hastings? You really don't! Well, well," with an arch smile at Kate, "you'll find out now, soon enough."

Kate staid to hear no more of this badinage. Taking her arm hastily from Herbert's, though not without a last look of love, she fled up the stair-case, like a frightened deer.

Mrs. Maxwell laughed softly, watching Kate till she was out of sight. Then she turned to Hastings.

"I congratulate you," she said, pressing his hand warmly. "You've won a real treasure. So much, too, for taking an old woman's advice."

"I wish all old women, as you call them, were as beautiful and kind as one I know," answered Herbert, gallantly kissing her hand.

"But how did it come about?"

"Ah! that's my secret," answered Herbert. And to this day he has never betrayed Kate. Only he and she know in what way she made her UNCONSCIOUS CONFESSION.

"A PERFECT TREASURE."

BY DAISY VENTNOR.

ONE day Frank came home, with a look of triumph.

"I have a 'perfect treasure' for you," he said, "in the way of a nurse. Gerald Temple is going to take his family to Europe, and when he heard what you wanted, offered to let us have their nurse, whom they will not want."

I heard a low sigh. Virginia, Frank's only sister, had been sitting in a corner of the drawing-room. She rose now and slipped out.

"How could you, Frank?" I said, following her with sad eyes. "I have never heard your sister speak of the Temples since she has lived with us: the very mention of their name brings back the memory of Gerald's brother, and all that sad tragedy."

"I am sorry," said Frank, "but I did not know she was in the room. Poor Virginia!"

Yes! poor Virginia, I said, to myself. But once the blithest, loveliest little creature I ever knew. It is something of a story, but 'tis "an owre true tale," and I will tell it in the shortest way I can.

Virginia and Frank were orphans, and old Mrs. Chichester, their grandmother, had adopted Virginia almost from her infancy. The old lady had very ambitious hopes of making a splendid match for her beautiful grandchild. But Virginia thought otherwise; and when she was just seventeen, at the time of my wedding, she and Langley Temple were insane enough to fall desperately in love with each other. Langley was Frank's most intimate friend, and the pair met continually at our house until grandma Chichester found it out. After awhile Langley was ordered to his ship, (he was in the navy;) but Frank waged battle with grandma until he obtained a viperish consent that the lovers might correspond. Grandma took pains not to let Frank know how Virginia was tormented and tyrannized over, until the poor child consented to go out into society again; and there she met, and made ready conquest of, the very man whom grandma had intended for her beauty—Horace Kent. Virginia refused him; but grandma said, scornfully, "That made no difference. She would come to her senses soon;" and, to my utter amazement, the *trousseau* went on, and by-and-by we were bidden to the wedding—a

quiet, elegant affair, where Virginia talked and walked as if she were frozen. Frank and I confessed to each other, that night, that the business passed our comprehension, for we had no idea then of foul play.

Kent and Virginia were to sail for Europe within a fortnight of their marriage, and went to Washington and Baltimore to pass that time. Left alone, one evening in Baltimore, with a severe headache, Virginia remembered to have seen some aromatic vinegar in her husband's dressing-case. Kent was peculiar in his careful way of locking up his belongings, and she took her own bunch of keys to open the box, when, rather to her surprise, she found the key left in the lock. Some listless, vague impulse, which she could never afterward account for, prompted her to lift the upper tray, although she had found the vinegar already. Underneath, to her surprise, she found papers, and was about returning the tray to its place, without further examination, when her eye was caught by the words—"My own Virginia," in a dear, a too well-known handwriting!

When Kent came back that night, he found his beautiful, young wife senseless upon her bed, with two letters crumpled between her cold fingers. One, the last letter that Langley had actually written her; and the other, the base forgery, in which he asked to be released from his engagement. Kent was not all bad. He loved her madly, and you may be sure that his sore punishment began, when, after the physicians had brought her out of that death-like swoon, the first words that came from Virginia's lips, in that strange, passionless tone, which is far worse than anger, were, "Remember! I will never forgive you—*never!*"

They came back to New York for a single day; but Virginia saw no one but her grandmother. The old lady, upon her death-bed, raved of that interview, and vainly implored Virginia's forgiveness for urging Kent on to his treachery. The newly-wedded pair sailed in the ill-fated ship which took fire off the coast of Nova Scotia, and whose name still carries terror to many a heart. Virginia was one of that handful of survivors; her unhappy husband fought for her place in the boat, and, remaining behind, himself perished with the

ship. The agony of terror, the long night which she spent at the mercy of the waves, proved too much strain upon poor Virginia's already overburdened frame, and Frank and I were summoned by telegraph to her at Halifax, where she lay for days, unconscious, with a brain fever. And then, to add to her misery, when recovering, she was thrown into a nearly fatal relapse by seeing, accidentally, that the Tecumseh had gone down, in the attack on Mobile harbor, with every soul on board. The Tecumseh was Langley's ship.

Kate came to live with us about two years before the commencement of my story. She seemed to feel a sort of sorrowful remorse about her husband, which was not grief, and yet it cast a shadow over her life. "He was treacherous and false," she said to me, one day, "and he broke my heart—but what right have I to judge him? Harrie, I told him that I would never forgive; and he died thinking himself unforgiven." Of Langley, as I told you, she never spoke.

Well, the "perfect treasure" made her appearance. She was a rather young-looking woman, with a pleasant, low voice, and very good manners, for one of her station. I was charmed. Certainly, this girl seemed determined to please me; she did her work in a faultlessly neat way; she amused and played with the twins; and baby had more quiet nights than I had known him to have for weeks. So, after a month's trial, I began to sing Alice's praises, and allowed her full control in her own department, with a good many privileges. Virginia alone did not seem to like her. Virginia had a curious way of looking at new faces—a searching, penetrating glance, that I always thought had a sort of mesmerism in it, all the stranger because her eyes were so gentle and soft. Alice never met the look fairly, as I remembered afterward.

It was the spring of '65. The closing scenes of the war were crowding thick and fast upon each other. Virginia kept her room a good deal. The warm April weather seemed to enervate her, and she shrank away from the joy and enthusiasm we all exhibited. Poor child! it was hard for her to hear of the soldiers and sailors who would be coming home now, and to feel that, for her sore heart, Pence would bring no balm.

One night, Frank had taken a box at the Italian opera in New York. We lived in Brooklyn, and, as Kellogg was to sing, I begged Virginia to go with us. But she steadily declined. She would stay at home and keep

house, she said. Now, two of my servants were going to a fireman's ball the same night, leaving only Alice and the cook at home; so I must say I felt rather more easy about the children when I found that Virginia would not go. Going from New York to Brooklyn at night, however, is a long journey, and it was close upon one o'clock when we drove up to our door.

In the meantime, Virginia, after our departure, had sat for some time writing letters in her own room. The twins were having a noisy romp in the nursery; and when she looked in to say good-night, Fred fastened himself upon her neck, and begged to come and stay with auntie. She yielded, and then Fred began building card-houses on the sofa until he got tired, when he curled himself in a corner, and in two seconds was fast asleep. Being very much interested in her book, Virginia let the little fellow sleep on, thinking that by-and-by she would take him up to her own room and put him to bed there, as she frequently did. At last she fell asleep herself.

She never knew how long she slept, but she had a painful nightmare sensation, as if somebody was trying to smother her; and after struggling with the feeling for some time, she slowly, and with a great effort, opened her eyes. Why! what had happened to the room? The gas must have gone out—it was totally dark, save a flickering gleam from the dying fire on the hearth; and what a sickening, deadly smell there was. With a lightning rapidity, which is more like instinct than thought, it suddenly flashed upon her what the strange scent was—chloroform! Then, as she caught her frightened breath, and shrank back into her chair, a low sound of voices from the dining-room reached her ears. The door between the rooms was ajar, and she saw a thread of light from it; the voice she first heard was a man's.

"Yer didn't give the young 'oman too much, did yer?" it asked, rather anxiously.

"Wish I had," answered Alice's low, stealthy voice. "I hate her! She suspects me."

"Ha, ha!" gurgled the man. "She must ha' been purty onevill to yer; yer usually gets on the right side of 'em. Is that 'er pitcher silver or plate?"

"Plate. The silver is up stairs."

Virginia shook as she heard the venom of that low voice. "She was Mr. Langley's lady-love, till her old grandma stopped it."

"And what were Mr. Langley to yer, my girl?" said the man.

"Hush! you'll wake the child, and I don't

"I want to do him any harm," Mr. Langley—"Mr. Langley—" The woman's voice softened. "He never said a dozen words to me in his life; but, look you, Vincent, I worshiped him."

"That's right. Tell me all, as I'm yer husband that is to be," said the other, with a coarse laugh.

"Mrs. Kent has splendid jewels, too. I picked the lock to look at them. You can take as many of those as you like. Come."

As soon as the sound of their footsteps died away, Virginia snatched the deadly handkerchief off her head, and staggered to her feet, though dizzily. She was a very spirited girl, and determined that the pair should not escape. But what could she do? It was vain to think of getting the cook to alarm their neighbors at the corner, for the next lot was vacant, and she must cross the hall, and go past the stairs, to find her. There would be no use in throwing up the window and screaming; the house was on Clinton Avenue, far out, and the policeman did not come past very often.

Virginia wrung her hands, when a sleepy murmur of "Auntie!" startled her. In a second her resolve was taken, and she was on her knees by Fred, kissing him and saying, "Fred!" my darling, "auntie is going to do something very funny. You remember how papa jumped you down from the balcony on Christmas day to run after the monkey? I'm going to jump you down now. Don't speak a word. Act like a man. There!"

Fred was just four years old, but a great boy for his age, and he always obeyed Virginia implicitly; so he rubbed his sleepy eyes wide open, and was carried to the window. The balcony, outside, was not far from the ground. As Virginia looked out, carefully, she saw, under the corner gaslight, a tall figure, with a gleam of brass buttons.

"Fred," she whispered, rapidly, "run fast to that policeman, and tell him he must come right here to auntie; then go to Mr. Motley's at the corner, and ring the bell with all your might—it is low, and you can reach it—and tell George and Harry Motley that aunt Virginia says there is a thief in the house. Don't be afraid, Fred; he a man, like papa!"

Over; softly, gently, over the low railing; and then, with a good shake of his small person, Fred's fat little legs trotted swiftly off toward the policeman.

Directly, under the balcony, a voice said, softly,

"What's wanted, ma'am? Can you open the front door for me?"

"I cannot," she panted; "there are burglars in the house, and I should be heard. Couldn't you get up here somehow? Has the little boy gone to the neighbors?"

There was no answer to her question, but the policeman easily followed her suggestion, and climbed up over the balcony.

The fire had now died out in the room; the only light was a faint glimmer from the hall.

"Wait!" whispered Virginia, laying her cold hand on the policeman's arm as he made a motion to go forward. "They are up stairs, in my room, looking for my jewels. If you will stand just behind that door, I will creep up the back stairs and reconnoiter; if the woman comes down to answer the bell, seize her. There is but one man; if I want help, I will call, and then you must rush up the front stairs."

"Are you not afraid?" asked the policeman, with some surprise; but Virginia was gone before he had finished the remark.

When she reached the stairs, she found, by the sounds, that the man had evidently gone into the silver closet, which stood on the other side of the back stairs, and that now she was between the two—for she could hear Alice walking about in her room. Quick as a flash, the little figure glided up the stairs, slipping off her boots on the lowest step; there was no light in the hall, except that afforded by the burglar's lantern, for the gas was turned down low, and the lantern set inside the closet-door. That door opened outward, and the key was in it; a spring, a sudden bang, and then the click of the key in Virginia's nervous fingers, as she turned it in the lock. A tremendous curse came from the captured thief, as she leaned breathless against the door. The same moment the gaslight behind her was suddenly turned on, and Alice confronted Virginia.

"You here, madam? Well, you and I are quits, anyhow. Open that door, or I'll send a bullet through your head! You didn't think of my having the revolver, did you?"

"No," said Virginia, looking in the girl's furious eye with her peculiarly calm smile. "Help! Police!"

"You may split your pretty throat calling," said Alice, seizing her savagely by the arm. "No one'll come; the cook's drugged, and you're at our mercy. Give me the key!"

"I'll trouble you for that pistol!" said a stern voice behind Virginia, as a quick, strong arm jerked the weapon away from Alice.

Alice, with a shriek, fell on the floor, for she realized all at once. But Virginia, gasping,

"Ah, my God!" gazed as if turned to stone, for it was Langley Temple that she saw.

"Virginia! don't be so terrified," he said, "it is my very self, no ghost. Take my hand, love; see, it's flesh and blood, like your own."

He had her in his arms. The door-bell was ringing furiously, but he would have let the neighbors pull the wire till it broke, before he would have left her in that dumb, shocked state. As he touched her, she trembled violently; then the light came back to her eyes, and, with a sob of joy, Virginia flung herself on the breast of him whom she had mourned as dead.

The Motleys had time to think that Virginia was murdered before the pair opened the door. Very much surprised were they, to see, instead of the policeman they expected to find, a very tall, handsome man, a stranger, in undress navy uniform. Fred, now that his part of the fun was over, began to roar, and Virginia took him up in her arms, while the four gentlemen, (assisted by the real Simon pure policeman, a brawny son of Erin,) opened the closet, and secured the prisoner. Within the next fifteen minutes, the other servants had returned, (for the burglary took place before eleven o'clock,) and Alice, having recovered from her swoon, was carried to the station-house.

I don't know how Langley and Virginia were occupied till my return, but when Frank thrust his latch-key into the door, Virginia flew out of the library, and tried, with a few incoherent sentences, to prepare me for seeing something! The consequence was, that when I pushed the door open in a very bewildered frame of mind, and saw Langley smiling at me, I was terrified almost out of my senses, and came near fainting.

To the best of my recollection, the household sat up nearly all night, though, finally, after I had heard the whole story, been speechless over Virginia's bravery, and hugged Fred, now fast asleep in the arm-chair, Frank dragged me off to bed.

I don't know that Langley and Virginia sat there till morning, but, certainly, the first persons I saw upon coming down to breakfast, were themselves, on the identical sofa where I had left them.

Langley's story is too long a one to be told here; suffice it to say that, being on deck as the Tecumseh sunk, he had been able to strike out from the sinking ship, and, under cover of the smoke and war of battle, to swim ashore. There, however, he was taken prisoner, and kept in close confinement for months, finally making his escape. Coming direct to Frank to gain intelligence before presenting himself to his family, he had stopped to light a cigar under the gaslight, where Virginia had mistaken him for a policeman. He had known her instantly; and, probably, only her fright and agitation prevented her from recognizing his voice, which, as he mischievously told her, he "did not disguise in the least."

Alice and her accomplice were identified by the police as old offenders. The woman had carried on a systematic pilfering at the Temples, and was an accomplished hypocrite. To my intense gratification, the pair were sentenced to the full term at Sing-Sing.

Langley and Virginia were married very quietly soon after. Frank gave away the lovely little bride, whose fair, girlish bloom had come back to her, and who, under the influence of love, seemed a different woman from the pale, sad creature, who had moved so quietly about my house.

They idolize each other, and, I think, have quite forgiven grandma Chichester and poor Horace Kent. Fred has always been a great pet with his aunt for his bravery on the night of the attempted burglary.

Between Fred's boasting and my sly teasing, poor Frank will never be allowed to forget his instrumentality in introducing me to such "A PERFECT TREASURE!"

PUT OUT OF THE WAY

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE SECOND LIFE."

CONTINUED FROM VOLUME LVII., PAGE 443.

CHAPTER XV.

WE will not dwell on the days and weeks that followed. Dick tried to comfort himself, for awhile, with the hope that his letters had been forwarded. He could not, he said to himself, be in the charge of fiends! Surely, no man, no matter how callous, would be so cruel as to shut him out from this one chance. Even the murderer, caught red-handed in his crime, was allowed an opportunity to prove his innocence, if he could. The law mercifully said he was innocent, till the jury and judge pronounced him guilty. "If Dr. Harte has a heart in his bosom," Dick said, to himself, as he paced his room to and fro, "he has sent my letters. To-morrow they will reach their destination. The day after aid will come, and I shall be free—free!"

But the morrow came, and the morrow after that, and still other morrows, and yet there was no sign of help. A week elapsed: then another; and now, at last, Dick gave up hope. "Oh! if I had but that villain by the throat," he cried, clenching his hands, and thinking of the doctor. "But no! no! I shall go mad, really, if I look that way. God help me, a miserable sinner! I must keep cool, cool, or they'll think me insane in earnest. I must temporize. Let me see, the keeper told me, that, once a month, Dr. Harte went, the rounds personally. It is only two weeks off. I must wait for that—wait for that—wait for that."

He was already, as you see, half crazed at times. He had got into a way, like really insane persons, of repeating his words. He would run his hand through his hair, would stop in his rapid pacing to and fro, would mutter to himself—any one, almost, seeing his wild gestures and wilder looks, would have pronounced him mad.

The month went by. Mr. Minch, the keeper, was sauntering through the fifth ward, jingling his keys, one day. He was fond of this sort of exercise. There were sixteen wards in the male department of this institution. Of these sixteen wards, two were open to visitors. Visitors came from all parts of the country, and were enraptured with the cleanliness, the

beautiful grain of the flooring, the snugly carpeted little chambers, the white bed-spreads, the parade of cheap books, the chapel, the laundry; they inquired how many barrels of flour were used in a week, peeped into the kitchen, wrote their names in a book, and found themselves civilly bowed out of the front door, delighted with the advance science had made in the treatment of the insane. If any, blessed with curiosity beyond the rest, asked about the fourteen wards that remained unseen, they were silenced by the reply that they were devoted to the patients whom Minch styled "woyolent."

Now the other keepers, for obvious reasons, as far as possible, preferred to hang about the show part of the building. But Minch, who, six months ago, had been a drover in Tipperary, had no squeamish dislike to the foul smells, or fouler sights and sounds of the lower wards. He relished the walk up the long, bare halls, and the wistful, entreating faces turned to him in the square openings in the cell-doors. "I don't foind so much differ in moi work, after all," he was wont to say, speculatively. "Ye couldn't in roison now call thim cratures, the loiko of uz. They're loike cattle, the moinde bein' gone, and they require to be trated in the same way."

Two or three of the cell-doors were open, and the inmates paced up and down the plank-floor of the hall. At one end was a grated window, opening on a strip of grass, the prospect terminating by a blank, high wall: at the other, a heavily clamped door.

"Minch!" cried half a dozen nervous voices, as the door was slammed and locked. For Minch's visit was the one event of the day to these poor gentlemen: his coarse jokes, when he was in a good-humor, the best mental food offered to them. But one young man, gaunt and haggard, with untrimmed, black whiskers growing heavily over his sunken jaws, was quicker than the others, and pulled him into his cell, and seated him on the one chair, and stood before him. It was Dick.

"Will he come to-day? Don't deceive me again," he said, huskily.

"O! tell ye, Muster Wortley, Dr. Harte ull make the rounds in an hour, and o! advise ye to kape a quiet tongue in yer head, or he'll send ye to a place where ye'll larn it, bagod!"

"There's no worse hell than this."

"Only troy the seventh ward, me man!" he chuckled, savagely, and went out.

Two or three pale-faced men were gathered at the door; they hurried in, and began to talk in eager whispers. Dick listened patiently, and answered them with a womanish gentleness. They dropped off, one by one, leaving only a white-whiskered old man, worn thin as a skeleton, whose torn coat was carefully brushed, and who showed through all his beggarly clothes the indefinable stamp of culture and high breeding.

"Minch tells the truth," he said, drawing Richard anxiously aside.

"I will not think it," was the indignant reply. "Since I was a boy, Mr. Inman, I have heard of this institution. It is the boast of the country! When they know that I am a sane man, they will not dare detain me."

Poor old Inman shook his head sorrowfully. "I have been here for ten years," he said.

"But you——" said Wortley, gently.

"I know. But that was only for a time. My son brought me. John! He did it for the best. It was my wife's death, Mr. Wortley. We had married, a mere boy and girl, and were old people. Only John was left of eight children. They brought her into me one day dead—killed on the street. I missed her. We had buried all the others. I did not think she would have left me. I was troubled in my head, I missed her so much. Then John brought me here. But I was never violent. Harte called it mild melancholia. I was locked into that cell yonder. I had men like Minch for my companions, and these poor insane. Only these! Only these! I was used to a life of culture and society, was fond of music and pictures. I think if I had returned to my old life, if I could now and then have heard a kind word from some one who cared for me, or if I could have even seen John's children sometimes at their play, I should have forgotten that old trouble, or learned to be patient and cheerful with it. There have been days when I have been so mad with hunger for a word from some intelligent, kindly human being, that I believe to have heard it would have cured me. It would have been something stable to grasp. But to be locked in these bare walls, day and night, like a felon: locked in, looked in: to know the next day, and the next, could bring only Minch,

and the mad men; and for recreation, the half-dozen dissolving views, suited to children, which I had seen weekly for years."

"But the physicians?"

"Dr. Harte is the assistant superintendent. You will find what insight he has, and what hope there is in him. Men, in his position, get blunted. Dr. Chase, the chief, lives yonder, in a house detached from the building. He visits the male department with the directors only, and passes rapidly through the wards."

"But why do you not go home?"

The old man did not answer for a moment. At last he said, brokenly,

"I wrote to John regularly for a year or two, but the letters never reached him. They told me one day that he was dead. He had written to me often, they said then; but Dr. Chase thought it best to destroy the letters. I never heard from my boy after he left me here. He was the last—the last."

"And now!" said Dick, after a pause.

"His son is a gay young fellow, quite willing to consider me incurable." He has taken out a commission of lunacy, Minch tells me."

"And has your property while you are incarcerated here! Please God, I'll right other wrongs than my own, when I am free!" For Dick hoped great things from his expected interview. He was young, you see. The young despair, and then recover, fall, spring up, and hope again.

The old man's face lighted for a moment, then sunk into its usual hopeless quiet. "It does not matter now," he said, despairingly. "I am an old man—the time is so short. But you——"

"Oh! I am safe enough! As soon as I meet the physician, I am safe." It helped him to hope, to talk in this sanguine way; he had, in fact, persuaded himself, within a day or two, that there was hope.

As he spoke, there was a confused noise at the upper end of the hall, followed by sudden quiet.

"He is coming!" whispered Mr. Inman, and made his escape to his own cell.

Dick tried to arrange his hair, and sat down on his pallet. Every day, lately, he had gone over this interview, planning the argument by which he would enforce his freedom. But now every word was forgotten: his heart beat hard in his chest; he knew by his weakness how the confinement and intolerable anxiety had told on him. One idea only was clear to him, that to be composed was his only chance.

The door swung open.

"You wished to see me!" said Dr. Harte, pausing outside.

Wortley rose and brought the chair forward.

"A word or two, doctor." His tones surprised himself; they were as quiet and courteous as though he had been in his mother's room at home.

Harte nodded, and sat down. Minch stood in the door.

"I have a statement to make," said Dick. "I will use as few words as possible; but I beg of you to weigh them well. This is a matter of life and death with me."

Dr. Harte's face was immovable.

"I am a sane man. I was brought here by a foul conspiracy. The Leeds, who placed me here, are the only enemies I have in the world."

A slight look of *ennui* had crossed the doctor's face at the beginning of these words. Unfortunately for Wortley, it was the invariable cry of all patients. At the name of Leeds, however, the doctor looked up.

"I know no such persons. You were brought here by your relative, John Wetherall."

"There is no such man! There is fraud here, and I call on you to right it." Wortley was standing. He spoke in a slow, controlled voice, holding his hand on his chest, with the one thought still clear to him, that, on his composure, hung his only chance of escape. "You are a young man, Dr. Harte," he continued, earnestly. "Put yourself in my stead. An innocent man, shut into this cell, without warrant——"

"I have the physician's certificate."

"Shut into this cell, the whole hope and business of life cut short for you in an hour, and *this* given you in its stead. I left my mother ill; she depends on me for her daily bread."

"Your story differs so much from that of Mr. Wetherall, that you must pardon me if I prefer that of the sane man."

"Test my sanity, then. Bring me before any court. I have here a letter to Judge Cathcart, of New York—he is my friend. He will bring me out on a writ of *habeas corpus*. Give me a chance to try my sanity."

Dick placed the letter, as he spoke, in Harte's hand. He was very pale, but his eyes, in spite of his efforts, blazed with excitement.

"I have another letter here, doctor, which I will be glad if you will post for me," he added, drawing it from his bosom. "You are a gentleman, and I can ask you to do this for me.

That man," pointing to Minch, "has tampered with my letters, sir. Somebody has read them: it must be he."

Dr. Harte nodded, with a slight change of color, and put the letters in his pocket-book.

A quick look of relief passed over Dick's face.

"When Judge Cathcart receives that, I am safe," he said. "I know, when I had a gentleman to deal with, all would be right; though I hoped to have seen you sooner, doctor."

It would have been well for Wortley if he had stopped here. But he thought his own case so sure now, that he might venture to speak a word in behalf of his fellow-prisoners. Dick had been noted, all his life, for his readiness to succor the miserable.

"About the management here, doctor," he began, in a deprecating tone.

Dr. Harte gave a shrewd glance at the speaker, and dropped his eyes, bowing attentively.

"I do not blame you for admitting me here; that is the fault of the law, I suppose. But you should have tested my sanity. For four weeks I and the other inmates of this ward have been left to the scientific treatment of Mr. Minch. I am told that it is the case in all the wards. Even delicate women, whose mental derangement arises from physical causes, receive no medical attention, but are left to the sole care and companionship of such women as they would employ in their kitchens."

"Your information is comprehensive," dryly.

"It is correct," said Dick, hotly. "I know the reputation of this asylum. But when science comes to us diluted, through Minch and his comrades, it is cursedly poor stuff. My God, sir! you would not let one of these ignorant keepers lay a finger on an instrument of music in your house lest they should injure its tone. And yet, when the minds of poor human beings are driven, by sorrow or religious error, into the very valley of the Shadow of Death, from which it would need wisdom and tenderness akin to that of God to deliver them, you give them up to these wretches to use as they will!"

"Have you done, Mr. Wortley?" said Harte, coldly rising.

"No; there is much more that I could say," he stammered, fearing he had gone too far. "But I know it is only needful that I suggest the evil to you. Any rational man must see the absolute fact as I point it to you."

"Minch!" Dr. Harte tapped on the door, and the keeper appeared. "I regret to find that Mr. Wortley's disease is much more aggra-

vated than I supposed. Let him be removed to the lower ward. For your letters, sir," tapping his breast, "as you are so accurate in your information, you should know that no communications are permitted to pass from the patients to either counsel or friend. I reserve the right of reading letters as a means of judging of the mental condition of their writers."

Dick had no time for words. He thrust back the table that stood between them, with a clutch at the physician. Judging from his colorless face and gleaming eyes, it would have fared ill with the latter, if he had fallen into Wortley's hands just then. But Harte was already on the other side of the door, which Minch looked in Wortley's face.

There was a moment's pause, while Dick stood in his baffled and impotent fury. Every word of the secret passion and tenderness, which he had written in his long imprisonment in that letter to the woman who was to be his wife, rose before him. In another hour this man's eyes would be prying into it, perhaps jeering at her and at his love.

Harte lifted the wooden flap, half a foot square, in the center of the door. Minch was behind him. "Och, give the man his letter. It's loikely to a woman," the latter muttered.

But the sandy little face of the physician had gathered a fresh air of authority. He looked speculatively at Wortley as a dangerous maniac: the more, because his paroxysm of rage was suddenly over, and he spoke with apparent coolness, although his lips were yet blue.

"I will escape from this place," said Wortley, sternly. "And I give you warning that for every word and act you will render reckoning."

"You will escape, eh? You will never leave this asylum with my will," answered the doctor, with a virulent gleam in his light-blue eyes. "Put him in the eighth ward, Minch. And I appoint Brady his special attendant."

Minch shrugged his thick neck and grinned. The flap fell and shut them out of Dick's sight.

CHAPTER XVI.

Much to Wortley's surprise, Minch did not return. The morning slid into noon, and broadened into the warm afternoon sunlight, but he was left unmolested in his cell. An hour after the doctor had disappeared, old Inman crept cautiously up and thrust his thin, gray face into the flap.

"What is it, Richard?"

"Brady and the eighth ward. I don't know what that implies."

"I do," under his breath. "I have been there."

"No matter," in his usual sturdy, bass tones. "I'll escape from here, and I'll take you with me, if there's a God of justice alive. Let them bar the dungeon as they will."

The old man, for reply, got hold of one of Dick's big, warm hands, and held it in his withered fingers, as though it was his last hold on the real world. Perhaps it was more than we know. He had dwelt so long in the late evening, in the chill, and dark, and utter hopelessness, and this rough, passionate young fellow had brought back the old daylight of the outer world to him, brought his boy again, and his own long-lost youth.

Now he was going.

"You will never come back," he said. "Never! Never! Men as sane and strong as you, with the world waiting full of love and promise for them, have gone down into that place before now."

Wortley's blood ran cold at these words; but only for a moment. All the old, fresh courage, which, before his imprisonment, would have led him to face any odds, had come back to him, as if by inspiration, in this hour. He felt, for the time, as if he could overreach even Dr. Harte and the doctor's myrmidons: that, let them do what they might, he would triumph over them yet. It was, so to speak, a frenzy of courage. It left him only too soon. But while it lasted, it made him, as it were, more than human. There was nothing, he felt, he could not brave. His brain, too, worked marvelously. In a flash, a plan of escape came to him, which only required patience, or so it seemed, to carry out successfully.

"They did not murder them," said Dick, impatiently. "There must be a limit to all tales of horror."

"No, they did not murder them."

"If you mean that they made madmen of them, I do not doubt it. Minch and Brady might make such a mistake when ministering to a mind diseased. But I am not the sort of man out of whom they can fashion one. There's no imagination about me. Now, listen to me," lowering his voice to a rapid whisper, "I will escape—with you. I may need your help. When the spring weather opens, you will be permitted to walk out on the grounds, won't you?"

"With a keeper."

"No matter. We must have some little

difficulty. Discover which is my window. Pass under it, and be ready for a signal."

"What is your plan?"

"I have none. It may need a month or a year to elaborate one. But I will succeed at last. Only be ready."

"I will." The color began to steal into his hollow jaw. "It is a great many years since I have had anything to think of, Richard," rubbing his hands softly together.

"I may be only able to give you the faintest clue. You must be sharp and watchful."

"I'll be as sharp as a trap. I was what the Yankees call capable in my youth; though you'd not think it now," with a sigh.

The distant door grated, and the old man slunk across the hall like a dog before his master.

Wortley's meals were brought to him regularly that day. At night he turned into bed, thinking that Harte had changed his mind. An hour or two after, however, he was conscious of a blast of cold air on his face, contending with an oppressive, irresistible drowsiness; then he dimly saw the long, dark corridor, and Inman's face, as the keeper's light flashed on it in the square opening of the door. It was a curiously tragic face in the darkness, with its thin, white hair blown back, and full of horror and pity.

Through the thick shadows of Wortley's sleep it touched him with a dull pain, a remembrance of old Lear, forsaken by his daughters. "Poor Tom's a-cold!" he muttered. Then a sweet, sickening odor filled the air, and his head fell flat on the pallet.

When he woke, in the morning, he was in the eighth ward. He raised his head, which felt stunned, and was weighted like lead. A gigantic Irishman, in a filthy shirt, sat near him on the floor, lighting his pipe.

A moment's reflection showed Dick what means had been used to bring him there. He determined to begin by letting this new keeper see that he knew the truth.

"Ah! chloroform," he said, quietly.

His companion made no answer.

Wortley never had been so coolly master of himself as since the moment when Dr. Harte showed him his true position. He determined to lay by his rage to keep until he should be free. For the present his business was to find that freedom. It was a task that would need the power of every nerve and muscle in his body; and more than this, it would need foresight and caution such as the headlong fellow had never shown before.

He would succeed; and once free, his vengeance would be as certain as his success.

He looked about him to survey the "vantage of the ground." It had one merit, it was close under his eye. The cell was of stone, six-by-ten feet. It was lighted by a slit in the wall, placed about two feet higher than his head. This slit was only wide enough to admit his hand.

"I must go out of the door," said Dick, to himself.

There were two openings into the cell—the door leading into the hall, and an open arch at one side, wide enough for a man to pass through, out in order to throw the two adjacent cells into one.

The cell itself was, with this exception, precisely the same as those set apart for convicts, sentenced to death, in the New York prison.

"Except that here," muttered Dick, "Dr. Harte is judge, and executioner, and public. The law gives its discipline before the eyes of the whole nation; but Harte works his will on us undisturbed, as though we were rats in a hole."

He got up, at last, conquering the intense pain through his eyeballs and temples. He had been lying on a foul straw mattress, laid on an iron cot, which was clamped to the wall; two or three stone vessels stood on the floor. Other furniture there was none; in this cell he was to perform all the offices of life, with such fresh air as reached him through the slit in the wall. The cell looked as if it had not been cleaned since its last occupant left it. Damps, and moulds, and smells too foul to name, hung about the walls.

The keeper, established comfortably on a low stool, meantime puffed away at his rank pipe.

Dick went over and looked through the arch into the next cell. The cell was the same, but a shade cleaner.

"You sleep here?" he said, turning to the keeper.

No answer.

"You are Brady, eh?"

Silence. The small, yellow eye giving one furtive glance at Dick. Wortley put his hands on his knees, and stooping down, studied the man. He had heard of Mike Brady as a foul hitter in the prize-ring, years ago. Then he had disappeared. Dick, to be honest, did not think the worse of him for prize-fighting. But to hit foul! The only human characteristic he could detect in the mass of muscle and beastliness before him, was obstinacy.

"If I do not talk to him," said Dick, "he will chatter like a magpie."

For three days, accordingly, Dick Wortley never opened his lips.

This was the routine of his life. He made what toilet he could with the water given him, Brady staring on during the whole time. Then he ate the meal, which had been shoved through the flap of the door. After that—nothing.

Nothing to read, to write; no human being to speak to; the same thoughts to go over, day after day. And they seemed—what wonder—to grow fewer every day. Another meal to eat, and then the filthy bed was ready for sleep, as it had been for a seat all day.

Dick spent the time in planning. He had a tolerably clear idea of the geography of the asylum. It was built in long, one-storied wings, jutting out from the main building, connected at the center. The eighth ward Dick had known from the others, in his old cell, by the dead, blank walls on each side, broken only by the slits of windows. It, like the other wards, however, was painted a soft, pearly gray, on the outside, and had a fine effect in summer among the groves of cedars.

Now this was the problem which hung before Dick, as he sat, day in and out, swinging his legs from his pallet: "To make my way through these stone walls without any tools but my fingers, and with Brady, P. R. looking on."

It was not an easy problem. In spite of his cool resolves, Dick Wortley found himself going back from it to Lotty, to his mother, who was now in want—perhaps starving. When he came back to his plan, his mind would not settle on it. It swung loose from his control as never before. There was a sharp sense of coldness in one spot of his brain. That, or the foul air, made him drowsy. He slept at noonday, day after day.

At night Brady usually drew his mattress into the cell with Wortley. Now, at night, Dick was wakeful.

Wasn't there the glimmer of a chance here? Brady was but a great dumb clod of matter, after all, easily overreached. Dick forgot that Brady had held his tongue for more than two weeks, which hinted at some unusual power.

Dick watched for a night or two; then finding the keeper unusually heavy in his sleep, he got up, stepped over him, and crept into the other cell. He had no definite idea of what he wanted to do. But to be alone, for an instant, he thought himself free. He stooped down to finger the lock.

His throat was gripped from behind as in a vice, and he was dragged back on the floor.

Dick fought. He was a strongly-built man, and this fight had been rusting and cankering in him for months. It was as well, perhaps, that he should do what he could. But it was like a hand of flesh crushed in an iron machine. All of Dick's strength went into his frenzied assaults and blows, and was wasted; but Brady's great carcase of muscle was cool and slow. When the time seemed to him to be ripe, he gave a sniff, and leveled Dick with a foul blow, jumping on his chest with his knees. Dick remained quite quiet there. It did not need any blows, the weight was enough.

Dick Wortley's head dropped to one side, grew sickly and livid as when he was a jaundiced baby; then the blood slowly rose to his mouth, and dripped, dripped on the floor.

The keeper picked him up and slung him on the pallet. The next morning he brought Minch in to look at him. While they were stooping over him, Dick opened his eyes. He struggled up on one hand and struck at them with the other—struck at them both. There was no more reason in his eyes than in a dog's.

Dr. Harte, hearing of this, prescribed "the hose." The hose was a wooden machine, on which Dick was tightly strapped on his back—head, legs, and arms, hanging down. He remained there as long as Messrs. Minch and Brady judged best, for the blood to be driven to his brain. Then they took him out, and finding that his head was heated, they fastened him under the shower-bath, suffering the slow drop of the water to fall upon one spot in the brain, until from the frenzied eyes, and unconscious moans of agony, it seemed as though the tortured soul within was seeking, at eyes and mouth, some means of escape.

That night Dr. Harte was sent for, and reported Wortley to be laboring under an aggravated attack of brain fever.

"I thought it probable that it would follow; his mania has been unusually violent, lately," he said.

CHAPTER XVII.

DICK, being a profitable patient, was nursed with tolerable care. He was removed to the dormitory. It was late in June before he was himself enough to know that the claw-like fingers, picking at the sheet, were his own. He had brought back but a shattered body with him from the gates of death. But he had learned reticence; he asked no questions, made no comments. He saw that he was kept

scrupulously apart, as a dangerous, disaffected patient, and laughed quietly to himself. Escape from the dormitory, he thought, would be comparatively easy.

He sent for Harte one day. So unusual a step caused a flutter among the attendants.

"My clothes are in rags," said Dick, stretching out his shirt-sleeve. "What provision do you make for clothing your prisoners?"

The little man was all alive with politeness. "You can purchase any article you wish from us, Mr. Wortley."

"I have no money. I will trade this ring. I know its value."

In this way he got his clean shirts.

"Wortley," said the doctor to Minch, outside, "is preparing to escape. I see the cunning in his eye. He is stronger in body and mind than he appears. To-morrow, let him go back to Brady and the eighth ward."

That evening, Minch came in to bring his supper. "I was in the chapel, tother week, when one of yer people called on Docther Harte," he said.

A cold shivering shook poor Dick's weak body at the word. But he did not open his lips. He knew the first sign of interest would shut Minch's mouth.

"I heerd some news of yer kln," Mr. Wortley.

Dick sat up. He looked ghastly and gaunt enough, wrapped in the blanket.

"My mother——"

The regulation frown came over Minch's stolid face.

"Now don't ye excite yerself; yer eyes is woid."

"Oh, God!" muttered Dick, and lay down, covering his face.

"Well, she's alive," said Minch, at last. "They've took her in to a sort of private almshouse. It's overcrowded, but it's better than the hospitals."

The covering was drawn closer over Wortley's face. Minch talked on for some time, but Dick did not hear him.

At last Minch said, raising his voice,

"There was a woman they said that you meant to marry, name of Hubbard. When you disappeared, she hung on faithful till the last. Then she heerd it wasn't a criminal charge that drew you off. But a woman. That was more than she could forgive. She's goin' now to marry a man named——named——"

A very shrewd eye was watching Minch from under the blanket. "Named Leeds?"

"Begorra, that's it!"

"That is all you have to tell?" coolly.

"Yes," with a crest-fallen air.

"Very well," turning to the wall. But inwardly Dick laughed with triumph. "You put your sign manual on that too plainly, Fred," he said. "She might forget me. But marry you? Never!"

To-morrow he would make the attempt.

But to-morrow he was back in his cell, with Brady as companion.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BRADY redoubled the vigor of his watch. During the day he never left the cell, or if obliged to do so for a moment, his guard was relieved by Minch. Twice a week he led Wortley out for exercise, going twice around the beaten path about the ward. At night, distrustful of his own heavy sleep, he went into the other cell, barricaded the arch with a great box, and drew his bullet across that for additional security.

Dick was not slow to perceive his advantage in this. During the night he was alone: whatever he did must be done then. On his own physical strength he could no longer count: looking with almost loathing at his trembling hands and legs. Skill and patience must do all. The first night the moon shone in through the grated slit high overhead, as Dick began to reckon his chances. The window was impossible; the walls were of stone; on the other side of the arch lay the fiend Brady, and a cell just like this. The door remained—the door was of wood, stanchioned with iron. The key Brady carried. "I can't steal it. I will have one made like it," thought Dick.

But to do this he must have tools. He looked for one minute, with a miserable laugh, over the bare walls and floor, and then suddenly pulled off his waistcoat, and examined the buckles of his braces.

Steel! the bands wide and thick, and, as it proved, good metal. Why, he almost felt his feet on the high-road at that! He considered their capabilities. One band for a file, and one for a knife. He could work them on each other, and on the iron hinges of his bed. He began, that moment, and worked most of the night. He could not detect that he had made the change of a hair's mark in them, especially as he worked toward morning in the dark.

The next day Dick slept heavily; there was nothing else he could do. About noon he was roused by a sound of filing in the room. A carpenter was at work at the door, looking

to him over his shoulder, now and then curiously.

"What are you about, my man?" Dick called out pleasantly.

"Making cages for Dr. Harte. One of his birds wants to get out, eh?"

Dick whistled and strolled up, looking on. The lock had opened on both sides of the door heretofore. The man had inserted a solid wooden panel on the inside, removing that penetrated by the keyhole.

"Give me a key," laughed Dick, aloud, "and I'll soon cut a hole for it through that wood."

"Through this, too?" opening the door, just as Dick meant he should, to show him that an iron plate had been slid in the panel, covering the back of the lock. It was held in place, at the edge of the door, by two screws, which could only be seen, of course, when it, the door, was open.

"You'll have to make a key in there out of your fingers, and cut through this iron plate with them before you get out," said the unsuspicious carpenter, with a half amused, half pitying look, at the "madman."

"You are too much for me now," answered Dick, aloud. "I must manage to get a screw-driver out of the buckles," he added, to himself.

He began to save bits of his bread that day, moulding it at night into a sort of paste. He worked again all night upon his tools. It was on the next day that Minch removed his clothes. They were frequently in the habit of leaving the patients in a state of nudity, on pretence of violence. But to the fact that it was Minch, and not Brady, who executed the order, Wortley owed the privilege of retaining his under-shirt and drawers.

The days and nights were now growing intolerably hot in the coolest parts of the city. What they were in these cells, infested by vermin and mosquitoes, under the broiling July and August suns, no words can tell. Thank heaven, you and I, reader, will never know.

In the dark and heat, surrounded with creeping, nauseous things, whose shapes he could guess at, with the air about him filled with fiendish yells and forlorn sobbings from the maniacs in the near cells, Dick worked on through that summer. There were but few events in it, but they were hopeful ones. It was the last of July when he finished his file. It was a month later before he completed his knife and screw-driver.

Three months spent for two or three paltry tools.

But Dick's courage had the true immortal quality in it. It was roused now, and it would never give up.

September came. Accident now gave Dick a helping hand. Brady, deceived by his inaction and perpetual sleeping, had grown lax. Seeing Dick stretched, as usual, like a log on his pallet, he ventured, one day, out of his cell-door, for a chat with one of the women. He left his keys on the box. When he came back, he fancied, for a moment, he heard a jingle when he entered; but looking for the keys, he saw they were lying untouched, just where he left them, while Wortley was asleep, the sun glaring on his face.

Under the sheet, meantime, Dick clutched his bread model of the key, his heart pounding against his chest, and his veins throbbing in his temples to bursting. This little trivial success seemed to him already like absolute victory.

After that he ceased sleeping by daylight, and took to whistling. It was regarded with mild amazement by Brady, as another of the inexplicable changes of his disease. Hour after hour he sat on his pallet, his head down, whistling shrilly the same air. Brady little knew that he was listening as he whistled.

But Dick fancied, at times, that his hearing, through confinement and illness, had grown as keen as an Indian's. Not a hum of the bee, through the dark cedars outside, escaped him; not a chirp of the grasshopper in the scorched grass; still less the footfalls of the patients, who were led out by turns for their daily walk.

Sometimes, however, even the stout heart of Wortley gave way. Inman might be dead, or gone to another ward, he reflected. Between him and success, there must lie, not only his own effort, but a thousand such chances, over which he had no control. Besides this, his foul surroundings, the companionship of Brady, the sense of imprisonment, and, more than all, the consciousness that he was in the midst of human life, as it were, all gone mad through pain and trouble, had shaken his reason unknown to himself. In an insane world, where there was nothing reliable or tangible to grasp by, he began to reason insanely. If this was the effect on his practical, steady intellect, what was it on more delicate imaginative men, with brains already trembling to their fall?

One day, however, Dick was attracted by a slow, feeble step in the grass without, accompanied by one heavier. The feebler one, he fancied, paused and lingered before his window.

The next day, at the same hour, the same step was heard, the same hesitation, and the next, and the next.

He was assured now. It was Inman. At the first unobserved moment, his fellow-prisoner, he knew, would give him a signal.

He prepared a long cord, that night, from ravelings of his shirt, soiling it till it was as nearly the color of the outer wall as possible. To the end he attached the bread model, now baked hard in the sun.

But how could Inman, even if he got the mould, have a key made in iron? God knows! But Inman, at least, could communicate with the outer world, through the servants, though he had no means of bribing any. It was the merest chance of a chance. Yet on such chances as this hung his success.

On a scrap of paper, Dick had been able, meantime, to write a few words of direction. He had noticed, in his walks with Brady, a mossy boulder under a great cedar. Under that stone, the iron key (so he wrote) was to be placed. Tying the paper and bread together, he contrived to throw them in the window-slit, lodging on the edge, so that at a signal from Inman, a touch would send it down the outside.

Then he waited day after day.

The feeble step still halted; but no signal came.

One day, however, the step approached more rapidly, and a queer quaver of a voice echoed a bar of Dick's whistle.

Wortley looked anxiously at his keeper. The man, fortunately, was stooping over, sheltering in his hand a match, which he was blowing at, in order to light his pipe. His back was to his prisoner. He was quite absorbed in his work.

Noiselessly Dick sauntered to the window, and, as he passed, loosened the string with a quick jerk. The mould swung down outside, and Dick pursued his way.

Returning, and whistling, as if unconsciously, he reached the window again. A rapid glance showed him Brady still occupied in lighting the refractory pipe. In an instant, Dick had drawn the cord back, and seen that the model was gone.

Ah! how peacefully he slept that night. But it was not only the hope of success, which made his slumbers light and happy as those of an infant: it was that, as he drew back the cord, he had felt a little twitch given to it, a sign that a friendly human hand and human heart was at the other end!

He had almost forgotten that there were such things in the world.

CHAPTER XIX.

AND now there came days and days of hope deferred, of waiting, that finally settled into dull inaction, I had almost said stupor.

One hot day, and sweltering night crept slowly after each other, during which Wortley had but a single thought, which was to keep off the maddening consciousness of the foul cell, and fouler human life closing him in.

Everything hung on the chance that Inman would be able to get the key made, and yet there was a hundred chances to one almost that he would not succeed in it. And if he did not, imprisonment would be for life.

Brady, who was at last goaded to chatter by Wortley's obstinate silence, beguiled the time, meanwhile, with anecdotes of some of the State asylums and alms-houses in which he had been employed; of gray-headed old paupers, who had been kept there for forty, fifty years, whose histories, whose very names, were long ago forgotten.

Out in the fresh air and every-day world, these true, revolting facts would have passed Dick by as hideous nightmares; here they had an awful fascination for his weakened brain. The damp walls, the unclean stench, gave them a present verity, and beyond these, the cries of the manics that night and day filled the air.

The autumn went slowly by. Weeks crept into months, but there was no signal or tidings from Inman.

Wortley settled down, at last, into a dull and heavy stupor, but conscious that his brain was giving way at last.

"If relief does not come soon, it will be too late," he said, monotonously, day by day, again and again to himself.

Twice a week, Brady took him out to walk. On pretence of weakness, Dick accustomed the keeper to see him sit down at one or two points to rest, one of which was the boulder under the cedar. At first, so sanguine was his hope, he would push his fingers into the damp moss beneath, trembling with the certainty of finding the key. But after awhile he gave up this expectation. He still felt, silly, for the key, but he had no hope of finding it.

Autumn crept into winter. The moss dried and burned away, and gave place at last to yellow clay and snow. All hope, even the last feeble spark, now died out of Dick's heart. From habit, he brushed off the snow, and sat

down on the stone; but he often forgot to put his hand underneath, and sat moodily looking at the ground between his feet, his thoughts creeping heavily out beyond the limits of Brady and his cell.

His stupor served him well. Brady, growing almost as tired of imprisonment as his captive, fell into the habit of opening the door into the corridor, an hour or two in the morning, and placing his camp-stool outside to chat with the other keepers in the hall. This inadvertence acted on Dick like a sharp spur on a sluggish horse. For a day or two he was quiet: then he crept after Brady: then he stood in the door-way, stupidly regarding him. The keeper drove him back, the first day, with a blow that would have felled a bullock. "He's nigh on an iijit," he explained to his chum outside. "Thar's some on 'em ther brains goes to water."

Dick overheard, and acted on the hint. The next day he came out with a more stupid leer, and the next, and the next, till finally Brady grew tired of driving him back, and suffered him to stand in the door, listening, with a silly smirk, to his stories to the other keepers.

When Brady had grown used to see Dick standing beside him, the latter prepared to go to work. Taking the inch-long screw-driver in one hand, he put both hands behind him, as he stood leaning with his back against the edge of the door, swaying it carelessly to and fro a few inches, attempting thus to remove the two screws which held the iron plate. But the screws had grown rusty and were stiff, and the force he could apply in this position was feeble. While he worked, too, he had to guard the imbecile look upon his face, listening to Brady's droning talk, who flashed keen looks of suspicion on him now and then.

For five days he worked without effect. The sixth the first screw moved. He left it, and began at the other. When both were loosened, he came to the work with a bit of soft fat, saved from his dinner, and hidden in the palm of his hand. Brady, that day, was engrossed in a long-ago combat between the McGuires and Furlongs, at Drogheda, and while he illustrated the fall of shillelles and cracking of skulls, *con amore*, Dick Wortley listened and laughed inanely, removed the screws behind his back, greased them, and reinserted them.

He had gained one point, and he drew a long breath.

The next day, he took the screws out with ease. Next, he drew out the iron plate, and replaced the screws. Then he went in and lay

down on his bed, the plate in his hand. Between him and the keyhole was only the wooden panel.

When the key came, what might he not do!

He was certain it would come now. Success had fired him as with new wine. He was his old self again.

He watched Brady, that night, as the latter locked the door. The plate was not missed. The narrow, black line, which alone had marked its presence on the edge of the door, had been too slight to be noticed.

The next day, Brady did not open the cell, not even for his usual gossip. There was a noise, from dawn, of scrubbing, and hurrying to and fro, outside. A white spread was brought in and laid over the bed. The cell was thoroughly cleaned and aired. Dick watched, with his heart throbbing, so as to shake his feeble frame. He could not tell, at first, what it meant. At last he overheard the keepers, outside, talking. No need now to wait for key, or stolen flight. The Inspectors were coming, and had asked to be shown through the "violent wards," so they were saying to each other. At ten o'clock they would be in this corridor. Soon after, Brady appeared, washed and combed, and attired in a decent gray suit.

Wortley, who had been scrubbing at his own haggard face, in his basin, waited patiently. A new hope had sprung up in his heart. If he could see the Inspectors, he need not wait for the key. The Inspectors would discover, at once, he was not insane.

"How soon can I be shaved, and have my clothes?" he asked, when Brady sat down, at last.

The keeper scanned him from head to foot, and shook his head, grinning to himself.

Dick stood up, trembling; gave one look at his half-clothed body, at the matted black beard, and the hair of a month's growth. He saw what the man meant. No one, looking at him, would believe him sane. He forgot, in that moment, to whom he spoke.

"For God's sake, give me a chance!" he cried.

Brady raised his fist, and then, remembering that the Directors were already in the building, sunk back in his seat, bringing his bull-dog features into the proper amiable leer.

Dick Wortley stood by the pallet, breathing hard. He looked down at his tattered and soiled shirt and drawers. Suddenly he gathered courage. He was a gentleman, he remembered, and these men, who were coming, were

gentlemen. There was hope in that, for they would recognize him, in spite of his dress.

The great clock of the asylum struck nine, ten! The heavy doors, at the end of the corridor, swung open. In the cells, a dead silence; in the hall, the sound of two or three pleasant voices, chief among which was Dr. Chase, bland and authoritative.

The halt made by the party at each door was but momentary. When the Inspectors neared his cell, Wortley rose, and stood close by the door. Brady made no effort to stop him, but surveyed his white face and shaking body with a half laugh.

The steps came closer outside. They were at hand—they halted. The door was not opened, only the flap raised, and a benevolent-looking old Quaker peered in.

"You will perceive," said Dr. Chase, "that we have continued the railroad down this corridor, by which the meals of the patients can be brought to each door. It is thoroughly made."

The members of the Committee were instantly intent on the railroad. One of them said, "Your arrangements are always thorough." Only the Quaker did not seem to be so much absorbed in the railroad as the others.

Dick bowed and pressed close, catching the old man's sleeve to detain him. He knew he had but a minute.

"I wish to state my case to you, sir," he said. "I want a hearing—justice——"

"Surely, surely!" said the Quaker, interrupting him. "Thee shall have justice. What is the cause of this poor fellow's ailment, doctor?" he said, turning to the physician. "It is a face that interests me."

Dr. Chase's reply was in tones too low for Dick to hear. One or two others of the Committee peered over the Friend's shoulder.

"I beg of you to examine me, and judge for yourselves," said Dick. "I assert that I am a sane man, unjustly imprisoned. There was a conspiracy, by which I was brought here. I have never been permitted intercourse with my friends, or my counsel. There has never been any effort made by Dr. Chase, or his subordinates, to test my sanity."

"You must not try to discredit Dr. Chase, my poor fellow. That is but a madman's policy," said one of the men, outside, smiling to the doctor.

"I throw discredit on no one. I simply demand my liberty," he said, hurriedly. "If there is any law to defend me, I appeal to it as an American citizen."

Wortley's eyes, as he spoke, turned incessantly from one to the other. They were sunken deep; they were fierce, from long nights of despair. The old Quaker tried, uneasily, to loose his sleeve from the grasp of this excited speaker. He evidently was a little in fear.

But he said calmly, nevertheless, turning to Dr. Chase, "The man was brought here with the proper vouchers, of course?"

"Certainly. He came with a certificate, as the other patients do. You may judge of his mental condition," he continued, lowering his voice, "by the ward in which you find him. Brady, his keeper, gentlemen; a very estimable man. I refer you to him."

"Ah, Brady! We know him. How do you do, Brady?" said one of the Committee.

"Do, sir? Wishin' my 'count of patient? Violent, gentlemen. Don't know as ever I nussed one with a bigger devil in him, when it gets loose. Lately, he's been shammin' stoopid. That's wore off, to-day, suddint," with a virulent glance at Wortley. "Nobody but a keeper kin know the depths of their cunning."

"No; I suppose not. Shall we pass on gentlemen? Good-morning, Brady!" said the same Committee-man.

But Wortley held the Quaker's sleeve tight. He knew it was his last chance.

"For God's sake, send me a lawyer!" he cried. "I will not rot here unheard. The vilest murderer, in an American jail, has a chance for counsel, and a public hearing!"

"What does thee talk of?" said the Quaker. "Thee can be taken out any day on a writ of habeas corpus. Here," producing a note-book, and opening it, "here is a sheet of paper and a pencil, and there's an envelope. Write thy letter to any man of law thee chooses, and Friend Chase will see that it is delivered for thee. Thee can ask nothing further than that," and he drew his arm away hurriedly, and was gone before Wortley could stop him.

The next instant the flap of the door fell, and Dick was left to his despair.

The Committee passed down the corridor slowly. An awkward constraint had fallen on them. Dr. Chase was gravely silent; and this tacit rebuke affected even the Quaker.

"Did I promise too much for thee?" asked the Friend, at last.

"You promised more than I shall perform," was the calm reply. "It has long been a rule in this, as in all similar institutions, that the correspondence of patients should be strictly

under surveillance. If the rule appears faulty to you, I am ready to hear your suggestions, provided they are founded on scientific grounds. But so long as it exists, I will carry it out."

"There is quite right," answered the Quaker, after a moment's reflection. "The young man deceived me with his calm manner. I acted too hastily, as *thou* says. But no doubt it requires an expert to detect insanity."

Dr. Chase observed a dignified silence. The other members of the Committee, however, declared that they had never seen a wilder glare in any eyes, than in Wortley's. It needed no expert to decide on *his* condition!

"And he thinks he was put in by an enemy?" pursued the Quaker. "Poor fellow!"

"There is not one of them who will not tell you the same tale," said the doctor. Then, in order to turn the conversation, he said, "I wish you to observe the boilers in the laundry, gentlemen. The heating arrangements are now perfect, I flatter myself."

Dick heard the steps echoing down the corridor. He sat on his cot, his head buried in his hands, every feeling gone, except that of

utter, utter hopelessness and despair. If he could not persuade so kind, so good a man as the old Quaker had seemed to be, how could he expect, he said to himself, to influence others? In the reaction, he forgot, for a time, all about the key. He regarded himself as immured forever, without a possibility of escape. "Or if I should escape," he thought, "they will follow me; they will all swear I am insane; and even a court of justice will pronounce against me. Am I, indeed, insane?" he cried, in his heart. "Has reason gone from me? Do my very looks reveal to others that I am mad? Mad! Mad!" he said, with his fingers wildly tearing at his hair. "Good God, mad! and I knew it not!"

A burst of tears came to his relief. When a man weeps, it is terrible; but those tears saved Dick's intellect, perhaps his life. Dick, for the moment, had been insane. If he had gone on, dwelling on his hopeless condition, speculating as to his own insanity, he would, like others, have gone mad before morning. As it was, he had a respite. But for how long?

(TO BE CONCLUDED.)

LAURA'S MISTAKE.

BY MRS. M. A. DENISON.

LAURA had been making out a bill.

MISS HAYDEN,

TO LAURA STETSON, DR.

Satin over-skirt,	\$5.00
Paid out for same,	2.00
Ruffling skirt, seven bias ruffles, corded on both sides,	5.00
Belt, with sash ends, braided,	1.00

Total, \$18.00

"That's all," said the tired girl, letting her pencil drop, and breathing a sigh of relief.

"I hope she will pay you to-night," murmured old Mrs. Stetson.

"She is well aware of our needs—none more so," was the sad reply. "At the same time she carries her old habits of saving into her new life, for she knows I shall not charge one half the price that a regular dress-maker would. She would have to pay Madame Joliffe twenty-five dollars, at the least."

"Well, it's a shame," replied her mother, "that you can't get the regular price when you do your work as well, and better, in my estimation. Time was when your father could have bought and sold Walter Hayden; and now you must work your fingers off for his daughter, who has neither your education, nor——"

"Oh, don't, mamma!" pleaded Laura, with a little laugh, that was partly hysterical. "You only make it worse for me, you see, calling up old times. Just say it will all come right in the fall, as papa used to;" and with the smile still on her lips, she turned the troubled eyes away, that her mother might not see her tears.

For poor, proud Laura, earning a scant living for her mother and herself, had a memory of the Haydens hidden in her heart.

When Bart Hayden, the handsomest man in New York, some said, had gone away, only a year before, she had thought of him for months after, nay, even till now, with quickened pulses and heightened color. The Haydens were not wealthy, then; but within a short time they had come into a fortune, and it was rumored that young Bart was also growing rich through lucky speculation.

It was just nine months since the death of Laura's father. He had dropped down, sud-

denly, while apparently in the full enjoyment of health; and after the funeral, it was found that his affairs were in a very tangled condition. In fact, only a small house was left to the widow, through the consideration of creditors, and that far from comfortably furnished.

Laura, the child of wealth and fashion, her father's idol, a delicate, thorough-bred, elegant girl, who had hitherto sunned herself in the warm rays of prosperity, and hardly knew whether she had a heart or not, proved herself a heroine. Whatever she could find to do, she worked at with all her heart. Plain sewing, embroidery, dress-making, for which she had a talent, and concerning which she had often laughingly said, that if she had not been rich she might have been famous; everything was undertaken willingly, and labored at uncomplainingly. She accepted the situation, though not without some struggles with pride, and many secret tears.

"Well, I suppose I must carry the dress home," said Laura.

Mrs. Stetson thought of the time when a carriage was at the call of her beautiful darling.

"Dear, can't I take it?" she asked, gazing at her anxiously. "You look ill."

"I am ill—that is, my head aches; but the walk will do me good," Laura responded, trying to look bright. "It's not far to the Haydens. Do you think I would let you carry home my work? No, indeed!" and she bent over and kissed her mother's forehead.

Out in the air she felt better. The nervous depression from which she suffered gradually left her, as she became interested in the sights and sounds about her. In gay and beautiful dresses, some of her former acquaintances passed her, a few with a nod of recognition, but most without noticing her at all—little stings there were, but she held her bundle firmly, lifted her head a trifle higher, and passed bravely on. Turning a corner, she came full upon an unexpected tableau. A smartly-dressed boy, with a feather in his cap, kicked and struggled with his nurse, who vainly pulled the obstinate child till her face was purple.

"Why, Lucy! Why, Benny!" exclaimed Laura, for the girl was nurse-maid at the

Haydens, and Benny the youngest hope of the house. "What's all this?"

"Deed, Miss, he's awful," said the girl, nearly crying. "When he makes up his mind, it's a tiger he is, Miss. Jest see him now."

Laura spoke a few words to the boy in a low tone, and he ceased struggling for a moment.

"We're all at sixes and sevens," said the nurse, "and the Missis is orful nervous. Mr. Bart's just returned from Californy, without no warning, and brought a beautiful young lady with him. I do suppose it's his wife from what I heard—and 'it quite upset the Missis, and made such a time! Now, Benny, there's that placeman; so you better come."

Laura heard, and for a moment street and houses whirled round, so that she had much ado to keep herself from falling. The words rang in her ears—"I do suppose it's his wife." The strange and sudden revulsion of feeling passed, however, leaving her deadly pale. Certainly, Bart had a perfect right to get married: a perfect right to forget her—of course, he had. Men had done such things ever since the flood, and would, probably, to the end of time. Over and over again she said he had never committed himself, and yet her heart answered that he had.

Those words he had whispered, had dared to whisper, she said, to herself, with flaming cheeks. What was it but an avowal? What a tingling memory it was! She saw herself as she stood at that moment, attired in the most exquisite fabrics, the acknowledged queen of the *fete*; and he, handsome and poor, had brought an answer to his question on her very cheeks, in her very eyes.

The blood burnt her face now; but as she came in sight of the noble dwelling, it receded, leaving her pale and almost faint.

She stormed at herself for being so supremely foolish; but the tears were very near her tired eyes, for all that.

Hugo trunks blocked up the hall. A loud, cheery voice sounded, that struck woefully against her heart; and the first person she saw was stalwart, handsome Bart Hayden, just coming forward as he issued his orders to the men who were taking the boxes up stairs. What right had he to look so suddenly radiant?

"Laura—my dear Miss Stetson!" exclaimed the young man, hurrying toward her.

But Laura's face was like steel. She made a cold, little bow; and did not choose to see the hand he extended.

"Welcome home, Mr. Hayden," she said, in a set, cold voice. "I came to bring some—"

she could not say work, "something for your sister. I generally go to her room. Is she there?"

He fell back a little. Strange how the light went out of his face.

"I—I rather think she may be engaged," he said, in a blundering, confused way: there might have been a little anger in the voice; "but—yes, perhaps you had better go up," and he turned on his heel.

"He didn't like to speak of his wife, and no wonder," half sobbed Laura, to herself, a choking sensation in her throat.

It was queer how the stairs bobbed about; but, perhaps, the thick drops on her lashes might explain it.

"What in the deuce makes her act so oddly?" muttered young Hayden; then in a tenderer voice, "poor little thing! it's pride, I suppose; but she might have seemed just the least glad to see me, I think;" and then he kicked a box out of his path, and went moodily to the door.

Anne Hayden was alone.

"So glad you brought it," she cried; "and oh! doesn't it look beautiful? What a fairy-fingers you are!" and she shook out the creamy satin with exclamations of delight.

"Sit down, won't you? I've so much to tell you. Bart has come home."

"Yes, I know it; but I can't wait—not a moment. It will be getting dark, and—and—" She grew desperate with the fear that Anne should see the tears, and the trembling mouth; and stooping, snatched up the bill, and placed it in the hand of her patroness.

"Oh, so sorry! Suppose you won't mind waiting for the pay till next week?"

"We are out of coal and wood," said Laura, her cheeks crimson; "and, in fact, we need the money."

"Dear me! Dear me! I was so thoughtless to spend every cent I had. But stop—I'll go down and ask Bart."

Laura felt as if she could sink through the floor.

"Stop!" she said, detaining Anne by a hold on her arm, her face quite white and proud again. "I can wait—never mind. Of course, I can depend upon you by Wednesday?"

"Yes. I'll run round before, perhaps. Must you go? You don't know how much I've to tell you. Well, then, good-night."

Laura had not worn her veil. The tears were running down her cheeks as she hastily descended the steps of the palace-like house, and Bart Hayden, who happened to be there, saw them. Oh! the humiliation to that proud

spirit! She threw a half-defiant glance at the handsome, pitying face; then, with a gesture that repelled him, for he had come toward her, she almost flew down the street, nor hardly drew a breath till she was at home.

How dreary and meagre it all looked! the few cheap dishes, the scanty table-cloth, the half-covered floor, the faded wall-paper, the worn-out chintz on chairs and lounge.

"I'm dreadfully tired, mamma; let me lie down," she cried, in a suppressed voice, and threw herself on the creaking old lounge.

"What is the matter, my darling? I see—she didn't pay, of course; and not a stick of wood in the house. Oh! the heartlessness, the wickedness of those who are rich! I thought——"

A loud rap. Laura hid her face. Her mother answered the call, and in strode Bart Hayden, almost defiantly.

"At least *you* will welcome me, Mrs. Stetson," he said, the old, fine ring in his voice.

Laura sat up, calm and cold again.

"Anne sent this by me," he said, and laid a sealed envelope on the table.

"When did you get home?" asked Mrs. Stetson, as soon as she had recovered from her surprise.

"Only a few hours ago," was Bart's reply. "I brought cousin Jack's wife with me; she was ordered home for her health, and Jack couldn't leave, so I took Mattie in charge. Poor girl! I am afraid home is not going to help her much, or, indeed, anything else."

Laura made an almost imperceptible movement. She was far from cold, now; her very temples burned.

"Well, good-night!" he said, stealing a glance at Laura, as he arose, after answering Mrs. Stetson's inquiries. "I've done my errand; and, Mrs. Stetson, you, at least, will let me come, sometimes, and talk with you, won't you, for the sake of old times?"

The mother's reproving eyes were fastened upon Laura. What did the girl mean by acting in this way?

"To be sure!" was her quick answer, "if

you will come to so humble a place. You see how the wheel has gone round with us. Poor Mr. Stetson——" and the widow could get no further.

"Yes, I heard," he said, pityingly, "long ago. Anne wrote me. But I am not one of the fickle kind, Mrs. Stetson."

This with a reproachful glance at Laura.

"Good-night!" he said, the next minute, and bowed to both women.

He had reached the door, when a faint voice called,

"Bart!"

Yes, it was Laura's eager cry. She was ashamed of what she had done, and heartily repenting.

He came back with half-suppressed eagerness in his manner, his glance wary, but anxious.

"I was just a little rude to-night," she said, looking dangerously beautiful in her humility. "Please forget it."

"Indeed I will;" and he seized her pretty hand, his eyes radiant. "I understand! Oh, yes! I quite understand—you were always such a sensitive little creature! So you forgive me, eh?" he blundered.

"It was you who were to forgive me, I believe," said Laura, demurely, her lips quivering, ready to cry and to laugh, too.

"Mrs. Stetson, will you allow me to whisper?" asked straightforward Bart.

"Certainly!" said the old lady, her heart beating quicker. What was going to happen? Had poverty done its worst for them. Was there, indeed, bright hope for the future?

Bart put his full, shining beard close to Laura's ear, and the second time said the mystic words, that had so long lingered in her memory.

Laura did not repulse him. He felt then that her heart belonged to him, that it had never gone out to any other.

So it happened that, after that evening, Bart Hayden kept calling, and that the widow invariably left the two young people together; and the end of it was, a brilliant wedding in less than a year.

HOW IT ENDED.

BY FRANK LEE BENEDICT.

I.

It had been a day of unheard-of atrocities and *diableries* on little Jem Larcom's part, from the time when he first got out of bed in the morning, and distinguished himself by kicking over a pitcher of water, because old nurse suggested that his face must be washed. He had gone on from bad to worse, until he committed the crowning sin of visiting the kitchen, and falling out with the cook. She would not permit him to use the toasting-fork as a dagger, wherewith to stab a dead rat. In his passion at having his taste for surgical experiments thwarted, he spat in the pudding, and was incontinently hauled up stairs, a mass of kicks and shrieks, to be brought to judgment before grandma.

Grandma sat in her easy-chair, very dignified and awful; but Jem was too far gone with rage to tremble before her frown, as cook and the house-maid detailed his enormities in the shrillest of staccatoes, the house-maid winding up with: "And me blissid shins is a rael rainbow, mum, where he kicked me wid his——"

"Pudding!" shrieked cook, who had just reached the climax of her story, which she had related without the slightest regard to the voluble narrative poured forth by her companion.

"You dreadful child!" exhorted the old lady. "What shall I do with you, I wish to know?"

To the horror of the whole conclave, including the three elder children, who were models of good behavior, Jem shouted.

"Hang grammar!"

The furious gesture with which he aimed the ejaculation at the stately old lady, showed plainly that it was his paternal progenitress he wished to send to execution, and not that valuable but utterly incomprehensible record of the rules governing the English language, which is the legitimate object of hatred to all children; and, indeed, Jem was not old enough to have made its acquaintance.

"What do you say?" demanded the old lady, while the rest stood paralyzed by this instance of total depravity.

"Hang grammar!" bellowed Jem, pounding the leg of her chair with both fists and heels.

"This comes of his being allowed to get out with the stable-boys," quoth grandma, looking needles at Miss French, the governess, who, roused by the tumult, entered the room, just in season to catch the repetition of that fearful malediction.

Miss French did not waste time in answering old madam. She got cook and the house-maid out of the room, apparently not curious in the matter of rainbows, as she declined to look at the celestial arc, which Miss Mulroony declared to have been imprinted on her right shin by the boy's boot-heels; sent Floss, and May, and quiet Arthur, away to their studies, and left grandma and herself alone with the culprit, who stood a swollen lump of sullenness on the hearth-rug, and was heard to repeat in a strangled whistle—his tired lungs refusing breath for a shriek,

"Hang grammar—grammar!"

Grandmother Larcom had been accustomed all her life to subduing people without much trouble, or, if she could not, to showing herself as firm and hard as a rock; but she could neither subdue Master Jem, nor be true to her principles. However, this morning it was necessary, owing to the aggravated circumstances of the case, to employ unusual severity; so, finding it impossible to reduce the criminal to submission, she tied him fast to the table-leg with her worsted garter. Jem gnawed the fetters asunder with his teeth, and made his escape, his soul filled with visions of liberty and adventure. An hour after, he was captured at the corner of a neighboring street by a policeman, who chanced to be awake at the moment, and brought back, regardless of his explanation that he had started for "Spike Speak."

When overtaken, he was found to have two slices of bread-and-butter, and his pet guinea-pig in his pocket; and he and the guinea-pig bit the good-natured policeman in the hand. The servant of the law was "sixth of kin" to Miss Mulroony, and so acquainted with Jem by sight; and he and Miss Mulroony held a long conversation in the area, while she bound up his wounded fingers, and fed him with cold custard, which cook allowed her to take, but which, some days after, on occasion of a quarrel,

accused her of having feloniously purloined; but she had arisen a rebellion in her dominions; but the old lady proved successful in preserving despotism, though the rebel went forth to voluntary exile; and the gossips declared that, for all madam looked more sternly calm than ever, her kingdom lost its pleasantness to her eyes when the recalcitrant departed.

However, the boy Jem was brought back, and had a long sermon and something good to eat from grandma, and was rebellious through both; but at the conclusion of his treat went, of his own accord, to Miss French, and after a whispered conversation between them, he condescended to make it up with his grandmother, though it was rather too much in the style of, "I've been bad, but I forgive you," to afford a moderately sanguine person strong hope that his ameliorated condition of morals would prove of long continuance.

Grandmother had to be satisfied, however; she had to be satisfied with very little in the way of proper behavior from Jem, though he was barely six years of age, and the old lady had wielded the sceptre of absolute authority all her life. Jem was a puzzle and a new revelation; and grandma's awful cap front was rendered so limp by the alarm she had undergone, during his absence, that she hailed the dubious avowal of contrition with eager words of praise, and a shower of kisses, from which apple-cheeked Jem retreated; and with his usual facility for spoiling any display of sentiment, said in his small, gruff voice,

"Don't—you hurt! Have you raised a beard, grandma?"

Then Jem went off with a picture-book and a cake, and Madam Larcom, thrown thus violently down from her pedestal, observed kindly to the governess,

"You are the only person that can control him. I don't know how you manage; but you are a dear, good girl, Miss French, and I am very grateful to you."

It was more of an acknowledgment than Madam Larcom often made to people; but you see it was dawning upon her that she liked pretty Miss French exceedingly, and as the quiet, brown-eyed girl had now been several months in her house, she was able to found her opinion on a reliable basis.

I think the world in general was not overfond of Madam Larcom, though a good many persons had been afraid of her—they said her dead husband among the number; but never mind old scandals. She began life as a beauty and an heiress, and had ruled with the despotic power of a reformed Catharine II. on a small scale—that is, until eight years before the season of which I write. At that period there

had arisen a rebellion in her dominions; but the old lady proved successful in preserving despotism, though the rebel went forth to voluntary exile; and the gossips declared that, for all madam looked more sternly calm than ever, her kingdom lost its pleasantness to her eyes when the recalcitrant departed.

It was her son Ralph, her youngest child, just past his twentieth birthday, when he and his mother had the last of their battles royal, and he disappeared, nobody knew whither.

There were other children; stately daughters and staid sons, all married and respectable, with flocks of their own; but though they were often invited to visit madam, such as knew averred that the visits bored her, and that she disliked the whole set, because they presumed to be obedient, while the darling of her heart had turned and rent it.

The eldest son and his wife were dead, and their four children lived with madam. Little Jem was born two years after his uncle went forth an outcast, and madam took him, a helpless baby, from the arms of his dying mother; the old servants said that she adored the child, because he so much resembled her own bad boy, in both face and disposition—but none of them dared to hint at the likeness in her presence.

No person knew the cause of the quarrel between the mother and son; she never spoke of him, and not one of her other children ventured to mention his name. The old nurse, who had spent her life in the family, told Miss French that there had been all sorts of stories, and the boy was dreadfully wild.

"But I'll not believe he did anything low and mean. No, no! I shall never know what made the trouble, I doubt, for though madam and I have hung together since we were both girls, and so will do to the last, I hope; to ask a question about poor Master Ralph, is what I'd never dare."

Little Miss French wondered over the affair, sometimes, and it seemed a dreadful thing to her that there should be such variance between the two; but she had a shrewd head of her own, and could see what a despot madam was; so she sympathized with the outcast more than a worldly, well-regulated mind would have done. But she never felt madam's tyranny herself unpleasantly. Madam was a thorough lady, and treated dependents with uniform kindness, though her will was law, and the most stubborn of her servants, or tenant-farmers, trembled before her terrific civility.

For madam owned a tract of land large

enough to make two modern duchies, up in one of the northern counties, with an immense old manor-house on it, that had come down to her from her Knickerbocker ancestors, (she was a Van Tassel, to be sure;) a house in which, of course, Gen. Washington had slept, and lovely Mrs. Arnold feasted—it would not have been a manor-house without those memories.

Madam spent a good many months each year at her place; for she had lived in the old mansion as a child, and every stick or stone about it was so transformed and brightened in her eyes by scores of sweet memories, that she considered it the most beautiful spot on earth. Just at the time Jem started on his expedition to "Spike Speak," and was ignominiously brought back from the street corner by the custard-eating policeman, Madam Larcom was preparing to transplant her household to Beve-wick—for it was the last week in May, and madam's laws in regard to departures and returns, were as the laws of the Medes and the Persians.

Three days after, they went up the river—children, little Miss French, and all; and charmed was the pretty governess at the idea of being in the country a whole summer, an interlude of Paradise which had not befallen her for several years. When madam and she were in the carriage, driving over to the manor from the station, and entered the beautiful old park, and caught sight of the picturesque mansion, Miss French fairly exclaimed with delight,

"I never saw anything so lovely," said she; "it is like a fairy scene."

Madam thought her a more sensible girl than ever, and began pointing out spots of interest, and telling stories connected with various old trees—for madam did not regard the race of governesses as imperious women are given to doing in novels. She considered it necessary to secure a lady as a guide for her small flock, and having accomplished that, to treat her as such.

For nearly a fortnight, quiet and peace reigned at Beve-wick; and during that time none of the sons and daughters came up to irritate madam by the goodness, submission, and host of other admirable qualities, which contrasted so forcibly with the conduct of the child she had so dearly loved. Madam saw more of Miss French than ever, asked her to drive, placed a riding-horse at her disposal, and showed her many pleasant attentions, which the little girl duly appreciated. Madam discovered, rather to her surprise, that she

was growing very fond of Miss French; but she did not fight down the predilection, though, as a rule, she was principled against becoming attached to people now-a-days. She had Miss French with her very often, encouraged her to talk, and was so sweet and motherly, that the governess wondered how anybody could think her stern and severe.

On her mother's side Miss French boasted some wonderful Cavalier blood in her veins; and she had eyes like the eyes in the pictures of the Stuart men and women—those wonderful eyes, which always seem sad and frightened by premonitions of the sorrowful future; and it is probable that the blood and the eyes counted for a good deal with madam, having certain poetical fancies of her own in regard to beauty and descent. Besides, though perfectly polite and deferential, the girl did not live in a state of eternal assent; she had opinions, and could hold to them, and bring her reasons; and madam was tired of having people accept her dictum, not only without a murmur, but with every appearance of delight, which seemed the more false to madam the more it was exaggerated. But I fancy that the greatest charm Miss French had in the old lady's estimation, was the love which little Jem bore her; she was the only person whom he would obey, but to her he yielded his whimsical fancies willingly, for she was a wise little woman, and knew the potency of persuasion.

Naturally, most of madam's dependents hated Miss French, "for an artful piece, who put on airs;" so did the troop of spinster sycophants who lived in the neighborhood—so, for that matter, the bevy of Roman daughters-in-law had done from the moment she appeared on their horizon. But nobody ventured to expostulate with madam, only the whole crowd piously hoped "that something would open her eyes to the creature's real character." They knew she was deceitful and sly; and the Roman daughters-in-law pronounced her grand manners insupportable. But madam, keen as a fox, told them that the manners were natural, sweetly reminding the lofty ladies that they never had a grandfather among them, and that their money smelled of iron or ointment, while little Miss French inherited her grace, her ability to float into a room like a princess, her delicate hands and fairy feet, from ancestresses who had been countesses; and offered many similar reasons, which might sound silly stuff to talk in a republican country; but, somehow, it vexed mightily the republican ladies to whom it was said.

Little Miss French was very happy in the beautiful old house, and went dreaming about like a girl in a poem, though, in spite of her romance, she could be severely practical, and attended to her duties as thoroughly as if she had been an iron-backed female, with blue spectacles, and advanced opinions about the rights of women.

It was impossible that the quiet should remain long undisturbed while there was a spirit of mischief, such as small Jem, about; and one day he broke it up by a series of diabolical proceedings, which covered him with disgrace, and ended in his setting fire to a wood-shed, by throwing a red-hot poker on a pile of shavings. After that, he was—well, in her perplexity, grandma went back to the old-fashioned method of punishment, and a convenient portion of Jem's person made an intimate acquaintance with the sole of the old lady's kid slipper.

The next news that agitated the household was that Jem had run away again; and nurse, furious that her darling should be punished, though for days past she had gone about averring that he deserved to be skinned, declared it was a judgment on madam for her cruelty—she had no doubt the dear child lay at the bottom of the lake. It was growing dusk when the fact of his flight was discovered, and the servants were sent out in hot haste in different directions; and I am afraid that many curses at the sweet cherub's expense were fulminated during the enforced leg-stretching on the part of those faithful, over-fed domestics.

Little Miss French, fortunately, remembered that a few days previous he had been with her in the great wood back of the grounds, and had asked if a hill they reached led up to heaven, as he could see the sunshine on the top of it while they sat in deep shadow at its foot. It flashed upon her that he might have gone there.

So she flew off without a word to anybody; and while madam was wringing her hands in her chamber, Miss French passed through the shrubberies, out by a gap in the wall, and hurried along the wood-path until she reached the hill. There, in the twilight, she saw a tall man approaching with Jem in his arms, and at sight of her, Jem cried out,

"Miss F'ench! Miss F'ench! I started up to heaven, and he bringed me back; and he's give me a knife, with sree blades in it, if I'll go home! Oh! ain't it bully? I mean to yun away to heaven again firs' chance I get."

Jem's bearer began to laugh, and Miss French, looking at him, saw a very handsome

young man, with a long, drooping mustache, and the most beautiful eyes ever put in a human being's head; and she wondered who on earth he was, and straightway thought of Arthur and Sir Galahad; but an instant's reflection told her that it could be neither of them. Whoever he might be, he began talking easily, and put her at her ease; and Jem, by his odd speeches, made them both laugh so heartily, that she forgot she was talking with a stranger.

Jem thought, as they were all three together it would be a favorable opportunity to escape forever from grandma and discipline, and proposed that if they could not get quite up to heaven, they should go as high as they could, say into the top of a tall tree, and commence housekeeping without loss of time.

They reached the gap in the wall only too soon, and the gentleman lowered Jem, and set him on his sturdy little legs.

"I believe you are at home now," he said.

"I am so much obliged," returned Miss French. "I know Madam Larcom would be glad to thank you."

"No need," he said, with his beautiful smile; "the little man's conversation has paid for any trouble."

Miss French appreciated the fact, that he made that speech instead of presuming on the position of things to pay her an offensive compliment.

"Come and see grandma," urged Jem.

"Couldn't possibly," replied the gentleman. "Don't cut your fingers! Shut the knife and put it in your pocket, if you have one."

"I've got four," cried Jem, indignantly; "two in my jacket, and two in my trousers—want to see?"

But the gentleman said there was no occasion; and Miss French told Jem they must get home; but she was rather breathless from her long race, and now that Jem was safe, and the first excitement over, she discovered that she had been frightened, and was tired. She sat down for a moment to rest on a mossy log, and the gentleman stood beside her, and allowed Jem to stamp on his left foot, while he talked pleasantly about all sorts of things; and Miss French learned that he did not belong in the neighborhood, whereat she somehow felt disappointed. She did not give the feeling that name, though; she told herself she was surprised.

Then she remembered that she must go home, and told Jem to say good-by to his kind discoverer.

"You'd besser come with us," urged Jem.

"I expect I'll get cold roast chicken for supper—grandma always gives it to me when I run away."

"As a reward for coming back, I suppose," said his new friend.

"But she spanked me with her shoe," cried Jem; "and a fellow can't stand 'at!'"

"Then you must be a good boy——"

"Th'shaw!" broke in Jem. "You 'ouldn't like it. S'pose Miss French was to spank you wiz her shoe!"

Jem was rapidly becoming indiscreet in his suppositions; so the little governess thanked the stranger again, took Jem's hand, and ran away through the twilight to the house.

She found madam trying to appear calm, but looking as white as a ghost, for the servants had, one by one, come back, and brought no information in regard to the truant.

"I knew you would find him," she said, to Miss French, and kissed her; and madam's waiting-woman, an elderly spinster of severe aspect, put up her nose, as if she smelled something very nasty, indeed.

Jem was in tremendous spirits. He displayed his three-bladed knife, and told a wonderful story so fast, that his grandmother could not lecture, of his going up to heaven, and being brought back by "a nangel." He did get roast chicken for supper: though, with her own children, madam had been principled against anything more solid than bread-and-milk. He was so full of delight at his exploits that there was nothing for it but to get him to bed; and when he was gone, madam shook her cap front at Miss French, and confessed that she did not know what to do with the sprite. She admitted that severity was useless, the old-fashioned rules of every kind without value. She was so much subdued by her recent fright, that she did not even frown when the little governess mildly suggested that the methods of government in favor, from the days of Solomon, did not seem to answer with the rising generation. Madam was so much perplexed that she forgot to ask a single question about the person who had restored the irrepressible child; and Miss French was very glad, though for the life of her she could not have told why.

Jem promised the governess to be good, and he was, till the next day at precisely four o'clock, at which time he rushed into the blue drawing-room, where grandma was entertaining a group of high and mighty Albany ladies, and, to her horror, Master Jem bawled out his freshly roused wrath in some very choice slang that he had caught from the improper society

of the stables, speaking more plainly than he had ever done in his life.

One of the stately ladies took pity on madam's confusion, and assured Jem that she was certain he did not mean to be naughty—such a pretty little boy as he was! Jem threw the whole party into speechless dismay by informing the kind lady that she was an old "parriot," for he heard his grandma say so, and finished by charitably offering to bite her without reward, if she would hold out a convenient spot. He was carried away, kicking and screaming, by an unfortunate footman, whom madam summoned in hot haste, and whose hands for days after looked as if he had been engaged in a battle with a family of wild-cats.

In spite of her being an instructress of youth, Iza French, during the next three days, had frequent visions of the handsome face that Jem's escapade had been the means of bringing momentarily into her world. But she could not help it. She tried to forget that face—it was in vain; the smile, the look was ever before her.

She did not know it, but the romance of her life had begun. Not auspiciously, she would have said, if she had known what was plotting against her. Alas! how would it end?

II.

It was at the close of the third day that Iza (I hero beg pardon for her absurd name, but I was not her godfather, and so cannot reasonably be blamed) went out for a ramble through the grounds. She strayed beyond the shrubberies into the wood, and there, before she knew it, came face to face with the stranger, who had played guardian-angel for wicked Jem's benefit. She felt the color burn in her cheeks, for it looked as if she had come out because she had already met him there. He was sitting on a log, with a sketch-book in his hand; but at sight of her he rose, and lifted his hat with as much grace, if less dignity, than Sir Charles Grandison could have shown under similar circumstances.

"I beg your pardon for being in the way," he said, noticing the blush, which made her prettier than ever. "I suppose you thought the coast would be clear, as I announced that I should leave this neighborhood yesterday; but here I am still."

He laughed so pleasantly, and it was so apparent that he was a gentleman, that Miss French did not feel the necessity of doing prude, therefore she laughed, too. Then he asked after Jem, and the boy made a good

deal of conversation between them: then they talked about other things: then Miss French remembered the rules of propriety, and went home very slowly.

But she was not through with the stranger yet, and had to transgress the rules of decorum still further: for the very next day she took a solitary ride on a little mare liable to attacks of insanity, and one came over her without warning; and she ran away, and was making preparations to fling the pretty governess off and break her neck, when that ubiquitous young gentleman started up from somewhere and headed the crazy brute into a thicket of alders, and caught Miss French as she was slipping from the saddle.

The governess felt faint, and had a strong disposition to laugh, then cry, and did both; and afterward sat up on the log, where he had placed her, and said,

"I'm a goose! I'm not hurt!"

"What made the little beast run?" he asked.

"She got frightened at old Solmes' scarecrow, at the corner of the road, and I was careless and not paying attention," she answered.

He seemed so anxious that she smiled at him, and entirely forgot that he might be the Wandering Jew, for any knowledge she had.

"I don't know how I am to thank you for all your goodness," she went on; "first for finding Jem, and now——"

"Don't give me any credit for a lucky accident," he said, as she broke down and could get no further. "I never used to think myself a fortunate man: but I believe that I may change my creed."

She looked a little uncomfortable at this speech, and he added quickly, "That was downright silly. I beg your pardon."

"Madam Larcom would be glad of an opportunity to thank you about Jem," she said.

"That would be a great waste of gratitude," returned he, rather stily.

My opinion is, that Miss French thought him a very stupid young man for not taking advantage of so plain a means of pursuing her acquaintance, though, of course, she did not put it that way in her mind. She supposed she was thinking that he was disrespectful to speak as if madam's thanks were not worth hearing.

"Bess seems quiet now," she said, looking at the mare, who stood a picture of amiability and submission, with her bridle hanging over the gentleman's arm. "I think I will ride home."

"I could get farmer Solmes' boy to lead her

back for you, if you are in the least afraid," he said.

"Not a bit; she isn't wicked, she only gets frightened easily. I'll go back the other road, and avoid the scarecrow."

He helped her on her horse, and, once in the saddle, she felt more confidence and better able to speak.

"I shall thank you, even if you don't like it," she said. "I do thank you ever and ever so much."

He made some laughing reply, and she rode away. The mare evidently desired to make amends for her recent folly and misconduct; but the stranger took pains to keep her and her rider in sight until he saw them enter the gates of the manor; then he went up through the wood, whistling in a very plaintive way.

Of course, there was to be a romance, and these encounters only made the beginning thereof; and though, in a wise, parental point of view, I cannot approve of a pretty governess, who is imprudent and lives romances, as a story reader and writer I am very much obliged to her.

More than six weeks went by, and, to the outward observer, life at Bevevick passed quietly enough—Jem's lawless performances always excepted; but there was an awful underground muttering, which threatened an earthquake sooner or later. Little Miss French was higher than ever in madam's good graces. Indeed, I think never in her whole life had the old lady taken such pleasure in anybody's society as she did in that girl's. At least, there could only be one exception to that fact, and of the exception madam never spoke. Much and confidentially as she talked with Iza French—telling stories of her girlhood, of her youthful society triumphs abroad, of her married life—she never alluded to the son who was so terribly lost to her.

But however much madam might be deceived in regard to the damsel, her old housekeeper and waiting-maid were not in the least blinded. The pair watched Miss French with eagle eyes, and in the sacred privacy of the servants' hall shook their heads dismally over the wonderful disclosures they could make, if so disposed. Sometimes one of the men, with the usual folly of the race, impressed by the governess' beauty and gentle manners, would ask why the deuce they didn't tell it, if they had anything to tell, and be done. But the housekeeper, with a wise blink of her eyes and a tremendous sniff, would reply mysteriously,

"The time hasn't come."

And Miss Taft, the vestal waiting-woman, would roll her head like a woman in a fit, and repeat,

"No; the time hasn't come. All I say is, I hate deceit and underhanded people. But wait till Mrs. Joseph comes!"

Then the housekeeper,

"Ah! yes, indeed—wait! She has eyes in her head! I says to one and all—wait till Mrs. Joseph comes, and then let underhanders and two-facers look out for themselves, for they'll get short shrift, and no mercy."

Now Mrs. Joseph was the wife of madam's eldest living son; a woman so upright and irreproachable in her conduct; so sage and correct in her thoughts; so affable and condescending in her learning and her religion, that it was impossible for an ill-regulated mind to do anything but detest her—and old Madam Larcom detested her with all her might. But she was terribly polite to Mrs. Joseph, and often paid her elaborate compliments in the most beautiful language, which stung like hailstones; only Mrs. Joseph's gorgeous panoply of self-satisfaction was so thick that she did not feel the sting in the least. Mrs. Joseph regarded Jem as a direct emanation from the father of Evil; and Jem hated her with such fiendish energy, that when she came to the manor it was necessary to watch him narrowly to prevent open hostilities, prompted by his familiar demon.

At last Mrs. Joseph appeared, and brought with her the two youthful scions of her house and her heart. These were round-eyed girls of thirteen and fifteen, so dreadfully crammed with ologies, and languages, and logic, and historical dates, that they were about as pleasant companions as two scientific encyclopædias; and their deportment, on all occasions, was a happy blending of what Queen Charlotte and Caroline Herschel were in girlhood.

The very first night they performed wonderful German things, in the way of duets for the larp and piano-forte, that sounded like mathematical problems translated into music. They talked to each other in Swedish, made quotations from Arabic, and spoke of Sophocles and Homer as familiarly as ordinary Misses might of their playmates. In short, they were determined to show old madam how much they had learned during the last six months; and I think they succeeded in dazing her by the display, also she would not have so far forgotten herself as to whisper to Miss French, as she did, when the pair were swimming out of the room at bedtime.

"It really would be a relief to see them tumble and bump their priggish little noses."

Miss French laughed, and Mrs. Joseph observed the impertinence, and wrath rose within her soul; not only because she suspected the forward creature was made merry by a jest at the expense of her accomplished daughters, but because, also, it was sickening to see her so completely at her ease with madam, in whose presence Mrs. Joseph, in spite of her virtues and her *esprit forte*, was never exactly comfortable. Really, Mrs. Joseph began to think that madam was growing childish. She never saw her laugh and whisper as she did with that pert little governess; and Mrs. Joseph made up her mind to mention her fears in a letter to her spouse before she slept.

But when she got up to her room—having been obliged to leave Miss French with madam—she was prevented writing her epistle by a clandestine visit from the housekeeper and Miss Taft. They unfolded their budget of news with much circumlocution, and many groans; and Mrs. Joseph felt so faint that she said her nerves were only kept from giving way by the hope of unmasking that serpent, which was a fine sentence, and fairly brought tears to the eyes of Miss Taft.

Unluckily, madam and the governess ascended the stairs in time to see the conscientious adherents stealing out of Mrs. Joseph's apartment; and madam silently drew her companion into a niche, where an undressed marble lady, who was Mrs. Joseph's horror, made her home, that they might not be observed by the busily whispering pair.

"I knew that woman was meanness incarnate," said madam, as she and Miss French walked on after the coast was clear. "She has had those two fools up to find out what has been going on! My dear, come in, like a good soul, and help me undress—I couldn't bear that treacherous old Taft about me to-night. I vow I feel all the while as if I was surrounded by a troop of slimy, creeping things! Little girl, yours is the only honest face I have seen in an age—don't you belie it."

Miss French uttered no protestations. She talked amusing nonsense, and made madam forget her bitterness and irritation; and when she was alone in her own room, the governess confessed to herself that there were worse afflictions in life than poverty, being a soft-headed little governess, who believed in affection and truthfulness.

Mrs. Joseph was not able to go immediately at her noble work of unmasking the serpent;

for the very next day luckless Jem was taken down with scarlet fever, which he had caught in a trip to the village, where he had no business to go, and so, of course, had gone. Fortunately, his brother and sisters, and Mrs. Joseph's phenomena, had been through with the troublesome malady long before—so there was no fear for anybody but himself. Nevertheless, madam was nearly out of her senses with fright; and Mrs. Joseph burst forth with learned counsel, which so irritated the old lady that she flung the courtesy of a long life to the winds, and actually called her sublime daughter-in-law "a crook-necked old turkey!" "I am sorry to chronicle the words, as uttered by a woman of madam's talents and position: but she did speak them, and Mrs. Joseph bore the insult like an angel. She wept, of course, but she assured madam that she forgave her.

"For the Lord's sake, don't do it!" cried madam, in reply.

But Mrs. Joseph's forgiveness did not hold out.

The only doctor in the village was the blindest and stupidest of men. He had killed ever so many children who were suffering from the fever; and madam, instead of sending for him, listened to Miss French, and allowed her to treat the boy herself, after a process she had read of in a late London medical journal. Mrs. Joseph considered this immodest and unwomanly, and when she heard of it rushed to Madam Larcom to expostulate. But madam was inexorable.

Mrs. Joseph hurried to Miss French in a rage of hatred and passion.

"I shall hold you as that boy's murderess!" she said.

But Miss French only laughed, and madam, in good round English, ordered Mrs. Joseph to hold her tongue and leave the room. Mrs. Joseph obeyed, for madam looked capable of putting her out, if she hesitated; but she glared at the governess, and muttered between her teeth, "Wait! I have my eye on you, Miss Serpent—wait!"

She only had to wait four days. By that time Jem was nearly well, and madam more devoted than ever to Miss French. Mrs. Joseph saw it, and gnashed her teeth. That fourth evening Miss French said she thought she would go and walk, and madam was glad to have her take the air. Mrs. Joseph was glad, too, for, thanks to Taft, she knew where the artful, young minx had gone.

The instant Miss French was out of sight, Mrs. Joseph flew into madam's room, and began

her task of unmasking the serpent. She got a good deal bruised with hard words while doing her duty; but she persevered, and brought forward so many suspicious circumstances, if not absolutely the proofs she pronounced them, that madam was forced to confess that Miss French must be called to account.

But she lacerated Mrs. Joseph's soul at the last, by saying,

"I shall speak to her, and I have no doubt she can make the whole matter perfectly clear."

"Oh! if you are going to believe her report!" snapped Mrs. Joseph, and choked so severely with outraged virtue that she could not complete her sentence.

"She may be able to prove the truth of what she says—which is more than the housekeeper or Taft could in their report to you."

"I did not say they told me," Mrs. Joseph began.

But madam cut her short.

"I know you did not, my dear, but that is the fact. I saw them leave your room the first night you were here."

Mrs. Joseph would have given an elaborate explanation of her conduct, but madam dismissed her curtly; and when the governess came back, took her into her chamber and told her, kindly enough, all that she had heard.

"My child," she said, "I don't believe that you will deceive me—I beg you not to. I am growing old, and can't bear such things as I used."

"I will not deceive you, dear madam," Miss French answered, though she grew very pale, and trembled somewhat.

"That's a good girl—a good girl! My dear, I know that Mrs. Joseph is—well, she is Mrs. Joseph! But these stories are discussed among the servants—that is not well. They say you have gone out, time after time, to walk with some one in the woods; that you have had notes brought secretly. Now, I want you to clear it all up, for I am sure you are a good girl; and it is a terrible thing that any person should have even a shadow of excuse to speak ill of a young woman."

Miss French hesitated for a moment, and then answered,

"I think I have been imprudent, but I meant for the best," she said, looking straight at her kind friend with loving eyes, which had no lie in them—which, in spite of her agitation and fright, were full of a new and strange tenderness, that reminded madam of the eyes with which her best-loved daughter, dead years and years before, had gazed in her face.

"How imprudent?" she asked, after that moment given up to pathetic memories. "Is it true that you have met some one—some gentleman?"

"Yes, dear madam."

"And will you tell me who he is?"

"Yes; I meant to tell you;" and madam recognized the entire sincerity of the voice. "I am engaged to him now."

"But you should have told me that, and had him come openly to the house. Don't you see, my dear?"

"May I tell you the whole story, and will you hear me through?" asked Miss French.

"Of course? I want to be convinced that you meant for the best—I must be!"

Madam sat down in her great chair, and the little governess crept close to her side, and got hold of the old lady's hands—such dainty white hands still—and with a quiver in her voice, more touching than tears, she said softly,

"I love him dearly, and he has been very unfortunate! I could not tell you before; but now everything is cleared up. He sent for me to-night to tell me that."

"What is it, dear? I don't understand," said the old lady, completely bewildered by the girl's confused words.

"How silly of me!" she exclaimed. "I am beginning in the middle; but, indeed, I don't know where to begin."

"At the commencement, child," replied madam, gently; "that is always the best way: half confidences are very unsafe things."

"And I want to tell you everything, believe me."

"I do believe you, little girl. Go on."

The governess bowed her head, and kissed the soft, white hands, saying rapidly,

"He was young and high-tempered—wickedly so. He can see it now, though he thought at the time that he was only showing a becoming pride and spirit."

"At what time?" asked the old lady, regarding her more earnestly, while a troubled expression deepened the perplexity in her eyes.

"At the time he got into this difficulty, which separated him from all his friends," said the governess, sadly.

"My dear," returned madam, in a severe voice, "a young man who gets into difficulties that separate him from all his friends, is a very unsafe acquaintance for any young woman."

"But this is different," pleaded the governess, eagerly; "he is so sorry, you see. He had been indulged and spoiled, and finally

his—the lady who had charge of him—got angry because he was so extravagant and wild; and the last time she paid his debts she told him that it must be the last—nothing should ever induce her to do so again."

The trouble in madam's face had increased while the girl spoke; now she tried to push her off, but the governess clung fast to the hands which she felt begin to tremble within her own, kissing them reverentially still.

"What do you tell me this story for?" demanded madam, in a voice that shook, in spite of her self-control.

"You bade me tell you," urged the governess. "You forget!"

"I never forget anything," cried madam, speaking sternly again; "never!"

"Let me tell you," whispered the governess; "I am almost through now."

"Go on," she heard madam say; but she would not have recognized the voice, it had changed so suddenly, and so strangely. "Go on, I say!"

"The lady gave him a check—don't stir!" (For madam was pulling her hands loose, and her face was white as death.) "She gave him a check—it was for five thousand dollars; but when it came again under the lady's notice it had been altered to ten thousand—"

She could not finish; this time madam forced her hands away, and half rose from her chair, looking terribly aged and ghastly in the lamp-light.

"How dare you!" she gasped. "How dare you!"

She could not articulate another syllable, and the struggle to maintain the supremacy of the old will over bodily and mental pain was terrible to witness.

"Only hear me! You promised, madam—you promised!" fairly shrieked the little governess, in a paroxysm of nervous suffering.

Madam sank slowly back into her chair.

"I never broke my word—I'll not begin now! Go on," she said, but her voice was hard and stony, as if a marble statue had spoken.

"They quarreled—those two—"

"This mother and son, you mean?" interrupted madam. "Then say so! Yes, she told him he had worse than murdered her—he had brought disgrace into her life."

"Dear madam! dear madam! He would not speak then; he had no proof, and he was mad at being suspected. He did not forge the check—it was altered by the man to whom he paid it. Now, after all these years, that can be proved. He has found the man, who has admitted his

guilt. Oh! don't you understand? Ralph is innocent!"

She was repeating the words over and over, but she perceived that they fell on deaf ears—madam had fainted.

When Madam Larcom came to herself, she made the girl tell the story more clearly. So Miss French told of Ralph's going to California, where he had become rich; of his coming back, determined to follow up the traces of the crime till he could clear himself; of his meeting the little governess in the wood and confiding in her; and now it was all plain, and he could see how wicked he had been not to tell his mother at first, even without the proof, instead of rushing off in a despairing rage.

"My son, my son!" cried out madam, and all the yearnings of eight long years found vent in that passionate appeal.

Mrs. Joseph, watching in the hall, heard it. In a moment she saw the governess fly out of the room, down stairs, forth into the night. By the time she reached the lower hall in pursuit, back came the governess, and with her a tall, handsome man, who dashed up the stairs like a tempest, and received old madam in his arms, as she appeared in the corridor at the sound of that step, which had not made music in her ears for such a dreary season—so dreary and so long.

By this time, worthy Mrs. Joseph was reduced to a state of coma, and sat stupidly on the floor in the lower hall, staring up at the scene, and, as if it was not enough to discover that rebellious Ralph had come back, pardoned, to get a share of his mother's money, madam was embracing the governess, and saying as well as she could in the midst of her sobs,

"My daughter! my daughter! God is very good to me! I don't deserve it! I don't deserve it!"

Ralph squeezed both mother and betrothed in his arms, and the little governess began to jest, to relieve the melodrama. At that instant Jem, roused by the noise, escaped from nurse, and clung about the knees of his newly recovered uncle, trailing a long blanket after him like a ghost, and making worse confusion than ever; and at last old madam wiped her eyes, and seeing her virtuous daughter-in-law in that humble attitude on the hall-floor, called with great animation,

"Come up, Mrs. Joseph, come up! Welcome my son Ralph, Mrs. Joseph, and kiss your new sister that is to be! I know you are delighted to see everything end so well, and Jem cured into the bargain. Come up, Mrs. Joseph—come up!"

So it did not end so badly, after all.

ON THE OCEAN.

BY HELEN MAXWELL.

WE were in London, stopping at the "Alexandra," on our way home from Europe. The month was June, and the gay London world was in all the rush and grandeur of its gayest season. Our windows overlooked Hyde Park, and my amusement was to watch the brilliant, animated throng in Rotten Row.

"Our party" consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Morgan, Henny (Henrietta) Morgan, aged twenty, and two little Morgans, a boy and a girl. Then there was Willard Henderson, my cousin, and myself; and lastly, there was a Miss Elliott, a tall, slight girl, whose age I could never discover—she might have been eighteen, or she might have been thirty. She was remarkably pale, and with such enormous eyes and sweeping dark lashes, that there was a certain fascination in looking at her. She never seemed conscious herself of the notice she attracted, and certainly never made any effort to attract it. She was singularly quiet in her dress, wearing always black or gray; but whatever it was, she invested it with an elegance all her own. She had been traveling in Europe for some years under the care of an invalid aunt, and only joined our party in Paris, for the sake of returning to America under protection.

We had our breakfast and luncheon served in our own parlor: but for dinner we went to the coffee room of the hotel; and it was there I first noticed the marked sensation Miss Elliott's appearance always created.

"My dear," Mrs. Morgan would say, "what is it about that poor girl that makes every one stare so? She is very lady-like and unobtrusive—and surely it cannot be because she is pretty! for, after all, she is not half so pretty as my Henny, though my husband raves of her."

"It is odd that he should think her a beauty," I said.

"Is it not? A sweet girl, I find, and very gentle, but certainly not pretty."

The idea that any one should consider Miss Elliott a beauty actually startled me. I could see nothing in her except her white skin, and the wonderful eyes and lashes.

"Willard," I said to my cousin, one morning, when we chanced to be left for a few moments alone, "what do you think of Miss Elliott?"

"I think she is a beauty," Willard answered, promptly.

"In what consists her beauty, pray?"

"Why, in everything! Her figure and face are perfect."

"Oh, Willard! she is extremely thin, and so very pale."

"She is pale," he admitted, "but her skin has that creamy whiteness, which is as rare as it is lovely."

"And is she not too thin?"

"Not one whit."

"It is rather peculiar that *you* should think so, Willard. Henny is twice the size of Miss Elliott."

"That, at least," said Willard, laughing; "but I am, nevertheless, in love with Henny, and not the least in love with Miss Elliott."

"Well, I cannot understand it," I said, with a shrug of my shoulders. "Men must see beauty where women cannot; and, honestly, I find her hardly pretty."

"She only needs animation to make her charming," said Willard. And just then Miss Elliott entered the room.

She was dressed in a very rich, plainly fashioned black silk, long and trailing. I had never before seen her with an ornament of any kind; but this day she had twisted two or three times about her throat, and falling to her waist, a string of large, yellow beads, of the kind that are only to be found in Rome.

"If you intend stopping at home this afternoon," she said, addressing me, "I think I will remain with you, for I am so tired of running about."

"Pray do," I responded, cordially. "I shall be delighted to have company."

Mr. and Mrs. Morgan and Henny came in presently, dressed to go out. Willard joined them, of course; and so, after awhile, Miss Elliott and myself were left alone.

We sat by the window with our books, but did not do much reading; the carriages, the equestrians, the brilliant toilets, the noise and bustle beneath us were too engrossing. It was not long before I noticed that, as usual, Miss Elliott was attracting attention. A horseman, looking carelessly up as he passed, caught sight of her face, and in a moment his look became

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fixed. He spoke to some gentlemen who were with him, and, of course, they all stared at our window. One of the party seemed particularly struck, for I saw him exchange some hurried words with his friends and leave them. Presently I saw his horse in the charge of a ragged street urohin, and the gentleman himself crossing to the hotel.

"How very impertinent!" I could not help exclaiming. "I have no doubt that man is coming over to find out who you are."

"What man?" asked Miss Elliott, turning her large eyes inquiringly upon me.

"Is it possible that you have not noticed the gentlemen who have been looking at this window in such a marked manner?"

"Yes," she answered, indifferently. "I fancy I used to know one of them. I have some recollection of having seen him in Nice, or Paris, or somewhere."

There came a knock at the door, and a card was handed in to Miss Elliott.

"Say that I am not receiving to-day," she said, without so much as glancing at the card.

It lay there on the window-sill untouched.

"Mr. Henry Esherwood."

I thought that she would, at least, move out of sight, but she kept her place; and when Mr. Esherwood had remounted his horse and stiffly removed his hat, as he glanced again at the window, she returned his bow with unmoved calmness.

It was the day after this that we left London for Liverpool. Early the next day we were on the wharf, waiting amidst the crowd of passengers, porters, and draymen, till the luggage was transferred to the tug. It was a busy scene and a cheerful one—though there were many tearful eyes, and some sad leave-takings.

"It is rather odd that there should be no one we know going over, is it not?" I remarked to Miss Elliott.

"I think Mr. Esherwood must be 'one of us,' judging from his camp-stool and traveling-blanket," she answered, laughing, and half-pointing to a group of gentlemen near by.

Sure enough Mr. Henry Esherwood, whose card I remembered, if not his face, stood within a few feet of us.

"Is he an old friend of yours?" I asked, ignoring the way in which she had declined his visit in London.

"He is an acquaintance," was the somewhat haughty reply.

I felt properly rebuked for my indiscreet question, and inwardly resolved never again to express any curiosity in Miss Elliott's affairs.

We went on board the tug, and from the tug to the steamer. Then came the finding our state-rooms, separating our "sea-trunks" from the mass of luggage to be consigned to the hold; claiming our "deck-chairs," and making ourselves generally at home and comfortable. Mrs. Morgan fled immediately to her room, knowing very well that it would be a miracle if she left her berth before we reached New York. Miss Elliott went on deck with the children and myself. She looked bright and positively pretty; for the first time I noticed a tinge of color in her pale cheeks.

"I love a sea voyage," she said, almost with animation; "and I am never ill for a moment."

"Nor am I ill," I responded; "but the days get to dragging, and become woefully monotonous."

"I like it; I like the life," she said, leaning over the deck-rail, and looking out to sea.

We were off; the water rushed past, and curled, and frothed, and foamed. The light clouds which, mercifully for us, hid the sun, sped before us, and dipped into the ocean. The deck was noisy with the tramp, tramp of many feet, and the chatting and laughing of many voices.

Dinner and the crowded saloon for an hour or so; the walk on deck resumed till dark; tea, and later, the eternal supper of anchovy-toast, or Welch rare-bit; then oards; a sly flirtation or two on deck—and so to bed.

The next morning there were very few people visible, and most of them were pale and wretched enough to give even an indifferent looker-on a fit of the blues. The weather was a little rough, and we pitched in a way to make "sea-legs" a very necessary part of our anatomy. I ministered awhile to the wants of the suffering Mrs. Morgan and Henny, and then taking my cousin's strong arm, I mounted to the upper-deck, and established myself comfortably for the day in my own chair.

"Poor Henny!" said Willard. "I do wish I could persuade her how much better she would feel if she would come up here and breathe this fresh air."

"You cannot persuade her, Willard. She will be well in a day or two; and it is much wiser to leave her alone."

"I daresay you are right. Poor girl! how she suffers, though. Heigh-ho! Would you mind if I lighted a segar?"

"Not in the least, provided it be a good one."

"Trust me for that. It is against rules to smoke up here; but I'll risk being caught."

The segar was lighted, and after one or two

puffs, Willard suddenly asked me what had become of Miss Elliott. "I think I will look her up," he said.

And he left me to my lazy ease and novel, and started off on a hunt for Miss Elliott.

A half-hour passed before Willard returned to me. "Can a leopard change his skin?" he asked, as he threw himself down by my side.

"It is generally supposed not," I answered. "But why?"

"You will understand my question presently," he said, mysteriously.

"I don't like to be teased, Willard—tell me now."

"Who is this coming toward us?"

I did not have time to reply. A familiar, graceful figure, dressed in gray serge, approached. Miss Elliott (for, indeed, it was she, though; at first, I could scarcely credit my own eyes) was leaning on the arm of one gentleman, while two others followed behind, all laughing and talking together. I no longer wondered at Willard's question—the girl was completely changed. She had a brilliant color in her cheeks and lips; her dark hair fell in loose waves over her forehead, and tumbled in a careless mass on her shoulders. She wore a coquettish little scarlet hood, and her gray serge skirt was looped over a scarlet petticoat. The prettiest feet possible were displayed as she walked, and her whole air had an abandon and charm almost childish. She did not look more than eighteen, and all the precision and stateliness of her deportment had disappeared.

"How are you?" she cried, eagerly, running up to my chair. "No need to ask, though, you look so well. I so love the sea and the motion, don't you? The rocking, the tossing is so delicious, it almost takes my breath away. I delight in it. Mr. Hunt. Mr. Tabor. Mr. Erickson," she continued, hurriedly, presenting her three friends to me. "Am I not fortunate to have found friends on board? I am always so lucky! Mr. Henderson, please don't look as if you quite disapproved of me. How sad that Henny cannot enjoy this! I hope she will be well soon, for we must all make a jolly trip of it. Mr. Tabor, if you will go and fetch my chair, I'll sit here for awhile." The obedient Tabor flew to obey this command. "And, Mr. Hunt, do run after him and tell him to be sure and not make a mistake; my card is tied somewhere to the chair, and I will positively have no other." Of course, Mr. Hunt flew, too. "Only sandy my forgetting my blanket! I must have it for you gentlemen to sit upon; and as we are all dreadfully hungry,

we can have our lunch, picnic fashion, up here. Mr. Erickson, would you mind asking my maid for it? No. 8—to the left as you go down stairs." Mr. Erickson, only too delighted, disappeared on the instant.

"And have you no commands for me, Miss Elliott?" asked Willard, who was enjoying my ecstasy of surprise amazingly.

"Yes; you may look up John Britton, (he is my steward, and very obliging,) and tell him we want the nicest of lunches up on deck."

"To hear is to obey!" said Willard, leaving us with a profound bow.

"How nice he is!" said Miss Elliott; "and what a pity he is engaged. If he was not, I should feel inclined to—— But I make it a rule never to interfere with other girls' lovers."

I was aware of the magnanimity of this, and I did not for a moment doubt but what she would be a very dangerous rival. I thought of what Willard had said, "She only needs animation to make her charming." And that she was charming now I could not but admit.

"Why don't you tell me that you would hardly recognize me as the same girl you knew yesterday," she said, laughing, and looking archly at me,

"I would not have ventured to tell you so, but you have guessed my thoughts," I replied.

"I am different at different times. When I am happy, I am gay; and I am always happy on the ocean."

"And you were not happy in London?"

"No; and I felt strange and rather shy with you all."

"Shy!" I thought, but said nothing.

The gentlemen returned from their several errands. John Britton provided an excellent lunch, and we made a merry picnic of it. A picnic under difficulties, however; for biscuits and oranges were always escaping, and had to be chased and recaptured; and we ourselves found some trouble in keeping our balance when the ship would give a sudden roll. But all this only added zest to our frolic; and the little shrieks, and the little clutches at one another for support, were a part of the fun.

I am afraid we were looked upon with disapproval by the few people besides ourselves who had ventured upon deck. One old gentleman, who walked the deck persistently, though rather unsteadily, and who shut his eyes whenever he saw a great wave coming, groaned audibly every time he passed us. And a poor lady, who was laying on a heap of shawls and pillows, looking very yellow and very ill, begged a passing steward to help her change her

position. I knew we were the cause of the request; but I felt no pity—one's heart gets so hardened on board ship!

"Where's Esherwood?" Mr. Tabor demanded, speaking between two bites of a sardine sandwich. "I haven't seen him since breakfast."

"He was smoking below stairs an hour ago," said Mr. Erickson.

"I left him in the saloon, making himself agreeable to a deuced pretty girl," said Mr. Hunt.

"And he is now behind the smoke-pipe, nursing a baby," said Miss Elliott.

"Not he! exclaimed Mr. Hunt, rather decisively.

"Go see for yourself; he passed us with a child in his arms not two minutes ago."

"It's true, I'll be bound," said Mr. Tabor; "he is always bothering about children. I vote we have him out."

"Have him out, by all means," cried the other gentlemen; Miss Elliott saying nothing, but looking entire disapproval of the measure.

Mr. Erickson volunteered to go on a search behind the smoke-pipe, and was duly invested with power to do so, and to fetch Mr. Esherwood to join us at luncheon.

"We are quite enough without him, in my opinion," said Miss Elliott.

"Then am I not to go?" asked Mr. Erickson, who had got rid of his plate and glass of ale, and had succeeded in struggling to his feet, in imminent danger of breaking all the dishes in the attempt.

"I have nothing to say about it," she answered, moving her shoulders a little disdainfully; "only, pray don't give the invitation in my name."

"Go along, my dear fellow, it's all right!" called out Mr. Tabor, seeing that the emissary hesitated. "Miss Elliott will like him immensely when she knows him better."

Miss Elliott looked rather scornful, and had resumed some of her *hauteur*, or so it seemed to me. I remembered that she had said the gentleman in question was only a "mere acquaintance."

Mr. Erickson returned almost immediately with his captive. Miss Elliott acknowledged his ceremonious greeting with the slightest inclination of her head.

"I hear you have been playing nurse," said Mr. Hunt, making room beside him for the new comer. "Miss Elliott vows she saw you with a baby in your arms a few minutes ago."

"I confess," said Mr. Esherwood, with a

smile. "Am I to be punished for my transgression?"

"You should be so—woman's prerogative! However, we'll let it pass. And now will you have a deviled bone? I can recommend the salad, having dressed it myself."

Miss Elliott was leaning back in her chair, looking bored.

"How tiresome all this is," she said to me, in a low voice.

"I thought you enjoyed it!" I whispered, in surprise.

"After a fashion, you know," with a little shrug; "these men are so stupid."

I immediately felt called upon to take up the cudgels in defence of my cousin.

"Willard, I am sure——" I commenced.

"He, I grant you, is rather nice—the nicest of the lot. Mr. Henderson," raising her voice, "suppose we take leave of this gay party, and take our places in the shade of that big sail, I have so much to talk to you about?"

Willard, man-like, was hugely flattered at having found favor in the favorite's eyes; and the two went off together, and were presently engaged in a seemingly most confidential discourse. I remembered what she had said about "other girls' lovers," and I rather resented her proceeding with Willard on Henny's account. Apparently, Mr. Esherwood had his private reasons for disappearing also, for he looked very angry.

This was the beginning of a little flirtation which, though it had no serious signs, was marked enough to attract general attention. I became very urgent to get Henny out of her berth, and on deck, for I began to fear for Willard's allegiance.

But Henny kept her room for five days; and every one knows, that five days on shipboard are like five weeks on land. A great deal of flirting can be done in that time, and acquaintances and friendships formed, which sometimes last a lifetime, but are more often forgotten as soon as the journey is over.

Mr. Esherwood and I struck up something of an intimacy; he attended to all my little wants in the way of shawls, books, and an arm occasionally for a little walk. And he made himself a great favorite with Mr. Morgan and the two children. Minnette was climbing about his knees, and teasing to be petted all the time.

The weather was now delightful, and the sea comparatively still. Every day the deck became more and more crowded, and pale cheeks were getting rosy, and languid eyes bright. Miss Elliott generally held a little court where-

over she was—and Willard was sure to be foremost amongst the courtiers. Once or twice I saw Mr. Esherwood venture within the charmed circle, but the queen received him so coldly that he presently ceased to notice her, and would even studiously look in another direction if he saw her approaching.

I, of course, surmised that there had been more than an ordinary acquaintanceship between these two. And sometimes I was inclined to think that Miss Elliott laughed more frequently, and flirted more decidedly when Mr. Esherwood was in sight, than at other times. I had feminine curiosity enough to very much desire the key to these mysteries, but wisdom enough to remember a former resolution, never to express any curiosity in Miss Elliott's affairs.

The sixth day Henny made her appearance, and I was relieved to find that Willard was as devoted, or nearly so, in his attentions as ever. Miss Elliott, too, was affectionate and sympathetic, and established her little court around Henny's chair.

That night was most beautiful—a full moon made it almost as light as day. The deck and the sails, for the wind was in our favor, were white and gleaming; and our great ship dashed swiftly through the water, leaving a long trail of dancing light behind her. A large party of us were grouped together around the mainmast, listening to a wild, sweet chorus that a few of the second-class passengers were chanting from their place on the forward deck. There were several good voices, a high tenor amongst them, and the air would rise and swell into almost piercing sweetness, and then die away in a long, melancholy wail. The effect was indescribable; and for some time after the song was ended no words were spoken. It made me very thoughtful, almost sad; and I slipped into a dark corner behind a mast, and sat there by myself for a long time. The deck soon became almost deserted; the attractions of cards and supper outweighed the charms of the night.

Presently the stillness was broken by a voice speaking in a very earnest but low tone near me, and a gentleman and lady walked slowly out of the deep shadow of the sail into the light. I saw with surprise that they were Mr. Esherwood and Miss Elliott.

"Miss Elliott, Nora, I'll stand it no longer," he said, as he passed me. "After an engagement of three years—years of devotion on my part, accepting your whims and caprices; consenting to be treated as a stranger at one time for the bliss of the privileges you granted me at

another. I cannot endure it." He stood still, making her stop with him.

"Let me go, Mr. Esherwood." And I saw that he had put his arm around her, and was looking down into her face.

"I will let you go after I have had my kiss. It is my right; I will have it."

"No, no!"

"I will; don't struggle, Nora—I will!" And he kissed her almost roughly. "Now go, and remember, I'll have no more of your flirting with Henderson, Tabor, or any of them."

He took his arm from her waist and walked on alone. She stood as if uncertain for a moment, and then turned and left the deck.

Without any seeking I had the key to the mystery.

Four more days—how endless they seemed; and two out of the four it rained persistently in sudden, drenching showers. No more moonlight nights! Indeed, we dared not stay on the upper deck, but wandered disconsolately up and down the lower, shut in from a view of the sea, and prepared at any moment to run in-doors for shelter. Miss Elliott had selected a corner seat at the very end of the saloon, and there she sat all day playing some simple game of cards with Mr. Tabor. She had nothing to say to Willard; and she passed Mr. Esherwood without so much as a movement of her haughty head.

Willard bore his treatment tolerably well, though I am inclined to think he felt a little mortified; but Henny now, of course, claimed all of his time.

Mr. Esherwood looked frequently toward the corner with a very dark frown upon his face. Once I saw him spring up as if with the determination to interfere; but he thought better of it, sat down again, and took to petting Minnette. Initiated as I was, I now took a great interest in the little play going on before me. Would it be a comedy or a tragedy? I wondered. I sometimes thought the latter when I saw the look which came to Mr. Esherwood's face when Nora would lean back in her seat, drop her long eyelashes in a certain low, effective way, and then raise them again suddenly, flashing her soft, dark eyes upon poor Mr. Tabor, who yielded without a struggle, and became her slave. What a coquette the girl was! She had brought her art to perfection.

Two more days! And now the rain-storm changed into a gale, or something like it; and we pitched, and tossed, and rolled, and we "shipped seas;" and once even the water came with a rush into the saloon, which was all as

it should be. Who wants a fair wind! and dancing waves all the time! We had bars across the tables to keep the dishes from rolling off; and the hanging shelves, filled with glass, shook as if they meant to shake to pieces; the wineglasses and goblets clinking and ringing against one another; and decanters of pale sherry noisily hobnobbing with bottles of Worcestershire sauce and mushroom-ketchup.

We unfortunate women were forbidden the decks; so we took our work reluctantly into the saloon, where we embroidered, and crocheted, and read novels for dear life. I tried to write in my journal, but there never was seen such odd writing, such eccentric "f's" and "g's," such incomprehensible flourishes! I gave it up, and knelt disconsolately upon the narrow crimson plush sofa, which ran around the entire cabin. I peeped out of a little window, watching the great, high, lead-colored waves, which, when apparently about to engulf us, would suddenly change their minds, and melt away with a heave that raised the "screw" out of water, and sent a shudder through and through our trusty ship.

As I knelt there, yawning drearily, and counting the hours yet to elapse before we could reach New York, I heard a hurrying of feet on deck, a faint scream, and then loud, eager voices. My heart sank within me—some one was overboard! Others besides myself had heard it, and there was a rush made to the door of the cabin. "What is it?" "What is it?" every one cried, growing white and sick at heart.

"Is the surgeon here?" called out one of the stewards, John Britton, looking into the cabin. But the surgeon was not there, and the man would not wait to give us an explanation. It all happened in a minute. I had hardly the time to leave my seat, and make my way around the table, when one of the gentlemen, who had rushed from the saloon to find out what had occurred, returned with the news.

A young lady, Miss Elliott, had ventured most imprudently upon deck, and had been thrown down with great violence, breaking her arm. It was sad, of course—but such a relief! I hurried out and stood in the doorway, ready to give any assistance in my power when she came down.

Esherwood had her in his arms; he was almost as pale as the girl herself. She looked now as she had done in London. No vestige of color in her face, and the dark eyes and lashes in such wonderful contrast. She tried to smile when she saw me. "It was my own

fault—I was so silly!" she said. And then a little moan escaped her.

"Are you in such pain, my darling?" asked Esherwood.

"Yes. Oh, Harry!" an almost childish appeal for help and sympathy.

"My own one! my poor little girl!"

He carried her down stairs and laid her in her own berth. I followed, very much inclined to laugh as I thought of the astonished faces of Mr. Tabor and Mr. Hunt, who stood at the head of the stairs in dire uncertainty what to make of such an assumption of authority, and such words of endearment from one who was almost a stranger to Miss Elliott.

The broken arm was set, and the invalid left in my charge and that of her maid. Mr. Morgan and Willard, (Henny was again in her berth,) and many others, came with expressions of sympathy and kind offers; but Nora would see none of them, and bade me close the door.

"I'll have no one but you," she said.

"Not even Harry?" I asked, naively.

"Not even Harry," she replied, with a faint blush.

I did not tell her then, but did shortly after, of what I had seen and heard that night on deck. She acknowledged her engagement and confessed her naughtiness. She had so hated to give up her liberty; and one's fun was gone if it was known that an engagement existed!

Oh, ye girls!

The tenth day, at four o'clock in the afternoon, we arrived in New York. What happy faces, what smart toilets again enlivened the ship! What a bustle of preparation and strapping of luggage! What feeling of stewardesses and tipping of stewards! Mrs. Morgan was as well and energetic as ever. Henny had her yellow hair frizzed and dressed in great style, and her pretty little hands buttoned into her neat little gloves. Willard, perhaps, found her more attractive thus than he had done in a flannel wrapper, the yellow hair in one long braid, like a Chinaman's queue.

Nora had to be dressed by very slow degrees, as she was quite weak, and her arm very painful. She laughingly declared, when at last dressed, that a lady might possibly look very interesting with her arm in splints, but that it was certainly not graceful.

This was at two o'clock, and Minnetta tore into the state-room in a tremendous excitement to tell us that she could see New York; and that the pilot was on board; and that the pilot-boat was No. 3—such a big 8! almost covering

the sail. And Mr. Esherwood said please hurry—and was he to come down and help her up on deck?

I said he might come; and the breathless little messenger departed.

The sun was shining; the water clear, blue, and calm, little boats scudding through it, and big steamers ploughing it into white ridges. The spires, and houses, and shipping of New York, were before us. The dock could be seen, too, and recognized by the crowd of people looking like Lilliputians in the distance. Everybody was on deck, everybody excited; some crying nervously with their very happiness.

Miss Elliott was welcomed, and pitied, and sympathized with; and all her admirers hung around her chair, and devoted themselves to her most assiduously. Mr. Esherwood kept back a little, but he watched her contentedly now, with no frown darkening his face; and she would constantly turn her dark eyes smilingly upon him.

I saw that poor Mr. Tabor was very uneasy in his mind, and his glances from one to another were puzzled and inquiring.

Presently Nora turned to Mr. Esherwood, and beckoned him to her with a little motion of her free hand.

"Harry, dearest, that silly Clarisse will make some absurd blunder about my things if you do not see to her. Do tell her what she is to do, and, darling, persuade her, if possible, to part amicably with her enemy, the stewardess. They have had, oh! such fierce battles!" she continued, laughing, and turning to us.

There was no such thing as mistaking the meaning of all this. Tabor had heard the "dearest" and "darling," with who knows what inward torture.

Of course, the little errand was made up for the purpose of bringing in the tender adjectives, and thus establishing the fact of an engagement, for Clarisse was a very sensible girl, knew perfectly well what she was about, and had had but one mild little tiff with the stewardess.

I acknowledge that young ladies ordinarily do not call their lovers "darling" in public; but Nora was not at all like an ordinary young lady, and she said the words very neatly and clearly, and as a matter of course.

Henny immediately asked if she might congratulate her; and Nora returned the kiss very willingly. The others followed with their congratulations, without the kiss. Willard blushed when he made his speech, and Tabor looked crest-fallen when he made his. But Nora accepted it all smilingly, and looked as happy—but not half so embarrassed—as every young lady should under such circumstances.

The ship slowly neared the dock. Hats and handkerchiefs were waved, cheers given with great enthusiasm, and eager greetings exchanged by friends on shore with friends on board.

We respectfully followed the mail-bags over the plank, only we, not so privileged as her majesty's mail, were detained awhile in the Custom House.

Esherwood took complete possession of Nora, and settled her comfortably in a carriage with her maid, and her shawls, and her bags.

"Thank you so much, dear Mrs. Morgan, you have been so kind. Mr. Morgan, I fear I have been a sad plague to you. Good-by, Henny! remember, you promise to be bride-maid. And you, too, you darling," turning to me affectionately. "Where are Charlie and Minnette? By-by, children. Mr. Henderson, don't quite forget me. Adieu!" She waved us a little kiss with her white hand. Esherwood sprang into the carriage—and away they drove!

I was at the wedding last week, and wore a pink silk made by Virfolet. Henny wore blue. The bride looked very pale. To my mind she is not so pretty on shore as at sea; but the gentlemen all declared she looked lovely; so I suppose she did.

The Esherwoods have gone to Canada on a tour.

Tabor is still inconsolable.